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Mujik .



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A Study in
Personal .
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LEO TOLSTOY





LEO TOLSTOI.

LEO TOLSTOY

The Grand Mujik

A STUDY IN PERSONAL EVOLUTION

By

G. H. Perris

With a Prefatory Note by F. Volkhovsky, Portrait,
and Bibliography

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PREFATORY NOTE

MR. JOHN BULL is the only representative of civilisation among the different nations who expresses himself with a capital I. He has a right to do so. There has been only one Shakespeare in the world, and he was English ; and Shakespeare does not stand alone on the English ground of creative power. The wealthiest nation in the world, the English have given birth to about half a dozen new nationalities still in process of formation. But what is perhaps still more worthy of mention is the fact that throughout their history they have shown the best and fullest results that self-consciousness, dogged perseverance, self-control, and personal competition can give. The enjoyment of the largest amount of practical political liberty in this country compared with others was an outcome of those features. But Mr. Bull uses his capital "I" so often, and he makes it so big, that it screens from him the rest of the world (not, of course, as a geographical actuality, allowing the importation of English goods, and missionary work), and even some of the truths

he himself has found out. It was an Englishman, Charles Darwin, who proved that the development of a race in one particular direction tends to make it one-sided by the atrophy of the features and abilities at whose expense that development was going on. This momentous biological law has given new life to the old saying, which was nothing but a metaphor, that nations, like individuals, may have their periods of ascendancy and of decay. The attention of biologists, sociologists, and historians alike has been drawn to the two gigantic factors of degeneration (not to speak of others) in our social life—(1) the crowding of all the elect individuals of the rural population into towns, where they invariably degenerate in many ways; (2) the slaughtering of the physically best individuals of the race by means of war. Side by side with these two factors, the ever-increasing process of specialisation works on towards a narrowing of faculties in the individual, a one-sidedness in his development, which, if unchecked, may in some future time become equivalent to that we notice now among the ants. We see their individuals developing in different types (castes), of which one, while preserving the reproductive faculties, has lost the ability of taking food; while another, which feeds the first, has itself lost its capacity for continuing the race.

One of the dangers of a powerful development in one particular direction is that the mental and moral faculties are gradually being so moulded in the course of this development that the nation and the individuals composing it become less and less able to

see in what they are lacking; and nothing perhaps tends more to increase this blindness than that national exclusiveness and rivalry which has been so much revived in our time. It is, therefore, like a refreshing wave of outside air coming into an overheated room to hit on a real, broad appreciation of internationalism in these days of ours. And this was the impression I received on perusing the proofs of Mr. Perris's little volume. The author remains a typical Englishman throughout, and with the thoroughness of a good Englishman declines to admit that "our great constitution" (as Mr. Podsnap puts it) and Great Britain generally are the only vessels in the universe into which the Almighty has poured his boons, and outside which nothing worth noticing or studying (not to say appropriating) by Mr. John Bull is to be found. He thinks it worth while to study a people whose psychology is altogether unlike that of John Bull, namely, the Russian people. He thinks that that nation has found its grandest and fullest expression in a man of genius called Leo Tolstoy, and that, whatever be the partial mistakes of that man as a thinker, one feature at least must be acknowledged in him as badly wanted by our business-like, clever, and artistic, but perhaps somewhat dry, over-specialised, and too conventional world, which idolises success at the expense of better gods. This feature is the thoroughgoing, passionate, almost painful craving for consistency of life, combined with intense and broadest human love. I am glad to testify that the whole of Russian literature and art is one grand expression of that feature as *the* feature of the

Russian nation. "To exercise an influence on the Russian reader," says one of the best Russian historians of literature (S. Venguerov), "the writer must be, in the first place, one of deep conviction." This feature of striving after goodness and truth, and making love the predominant key of life, Mr. Perris traces throughout the literary and social career of Leo Tolstoy, "the grand *mujik*" as he calls him, and he insists on the English studying and learning to love and admire the Russian nation in Leo Tolstoy. This is a happy way of putting the subject before his readers, because if John Bull can be induced to believe that he may learn something from the Russian nation it may be achieved only by his appreciation of the acknowledged grandeur and genius of a representative of that nation.

In speaking as I do of Mr. Perris's essay, I do not mean to say that I endorse every particular opinion or statement in it. We Russians may have our own views about many points of Leo Tolstoy's teaching. We may perhaps feel that in the face of an unfortunate historical past, which has brought so much oppression in the present, too much love and striving after personal perfection becomes in us almost a vice. But just because we cannot possibly dismiss from our minds and hearts the pangs of the present moment, it is better that such an essay should be written by an Englishman. His heart cannot ache so intensely at the sight of Leo Tolstoy preaching to the starving Russian peasant that his starvation is bliss while his employer's opulence is misfortune. He has not before his eyes those thousands of the best young Russians

of both sexes who have exhausted and therefore wasted their energies in trying to carry out in life all the innumerable contradictions that have been put before them by the great prophet about the real destination of woman, about active love, and non-resistance to violence, about spiritual progress and derision of beauty, &c. He, therefore, is better able to cast off all that is temporary and conditional in the imposing personality of the Grand Russian, and to put forward only those features which will stand the test of time and are the concern of the whole order of mankind.

To make two great peoples (I do not say governments) understand, esteem, and mutually profit by the psychology and experience of one another is a problem requiring the assiduous and loving work of many men, and a good stretch of time. But the earnest enthusiasm and the abilities of only one man thrown into this cause—be it but in the scanty space of a couple of hundred small pages—are already a valuable factor in the accumulation of clear understanding and goodwill among mankind, and that is why I wish every success to Mr. Perris's volume. This success is assured, I am glad to say, by the author's thorough knowledge of his subject, and his ability to present it—serious as it is—in a brief, easy, and taking form.

F. VOLKHOVSKY.

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LEO TOLSTOY



I

OLD AND YOUNG RUSSIA

PETERSBURG is the scum on the surface of Russian life. A bald copy of the Western capitals, it will not bear comparison with them in any characteristic feature : it has none of the brilliance of Paris, the solidity of Berlin, Rome's dominating tradition, the rugged and homely strength of London ; it has not even the beauty of Stockholm, or the bustling virility of Copenhagen. A marsh it was in the beginning, and muddy and feverish it will remain till it becomes in truth the metropolis of Russian life, till the people take it in hand and make it their own. Its palaces do not interest me ; the Hermitage, huddled up behind one of them, suggests only too plainly the petrifying influence of despotism upon the sciences and arts. But one thing, of which, to be sure, the

guide-books say nothing, gives a touch of romance to the dull features of this unimpressive city. If it be not Russia at all, it is the chief seat of her rulers; and as such it has necessarily been the scene of the most striking protests against the abuse of absolute power. A peasant's war was possible in the days of Pougacheff; but in these later times the chief recoil from intolerable tyranny is naturally on its own threshold, where the Western spirit has stimulated the native ferment, and where action promises to be most effective. I cross the Neva by the pontoons (fancy a *wooden* bridge between Charing Cross and Waterloo!) to the old fortress, the Russian Bastille, and wander about within the limits prescribed to sight-seers—round the barracks and arsenals, the mint, the gardens, into the dingy little cathedral, full of tombs of the Tsars, from Peter downward. It is not to the Tsars, or even such of their families or favourites as met a cruel death on this grim island, that my thoughts fly back, but to a multitude of the martyrs of liberty, three generations of them—the Decembrists, the early “Nihilists,” the later revolutionists—and between and after these a little host of figures prominent in science or poetry, who preferred a free soul to a free body, and gave their lives in the attempt to rouse their country. On these walls they hanged the chief rebels of 1825, save a few whom they buried for years in the dungeons around and below. Here Karakozoff was tortured and hanged, already at the point of death. In one of these grim casemates Tchernychevsky wrote, in 1864, his epoch-making novel, “What's to be Done?” Here

Dimitri Pisareff was imprisoned, a little later, till, with shattered health, he could be reported harmless. Here Solovieff was hanged in 1879. Here many of the ardent young democratic propagandists of the first period of active revolt were entombed in 1874. Many of them went mad, succumbed to disease, or committed suicide. Of a thousand arrested, only 198 were put on trial, after three years of this death-in-life, only half of whom were found in any measure "guilty." Thanks to which, there was no lack of "guilt" in the next few years, and the Petropavlovsk fortress continued to offer a handy receptacle for the Tsar's captives. Up to quite lately the Troubetskoy bastion, which faces the Neva towards the south-west, was the chief preliminary prison for political offenders in the Empire, and God only knows all the horrors that have been enacted within its walls. In one of the seventy-two dark and humid cells of the bastion,—he describes it as "a true grave, where the prisoner for two, three, five years hears no human voice, and sees no human being except two or three gaolers, deaf and mute when addressed"—Prince Krapotkin spent two years, being allowed, as a special favour to the Imperial Geographical Society, to complete his large work on the Glacial period. Here another Russian patriot who has found freedom on English soil, Felix Volkhovsky, was imprisoned in the early seventies, till he had become deaf and almost speechless, and was, indeed, on the verge of insanity. Worst of all are the records of the Alexis ravelin—where Netchaieff was chained to the wall of his dungeon—and the Troubetskoi ravelin, which is on the west

side of the island. I recall some accounts of the condition of a party of twenty-six political prisoners, six of them being women, when removed from this sepulchre in 1883, and most terrible narratives they are. Six members of the party were already in an advanced stage of consumption, others were suffering from scurvy, all were so utterly broken down that it was only after three months' stay in another prison that they were strong enough for the journey of five thousand miles to the Kara mines, where new infamies awaited them. So the Tsars break their victims. In the last decade the castle of Schlusselburg, on Lake Ladoga, has offered a more favourable stage for the tyrant's vengeance on that elect few for whom the far wastes of Eastern Siberia or the rigours of Saghalien are thought too mild a fate. But still the old Bastille in the centre of the capital has its uses; its walls, frowning across the Neva, still serve as a warning to the children of light; its roll of martyrs is still open. Five months after I stood upon this spot they brought in from the city a girl student whom they chose to suspect of some connection with a group of the Party of the Popular Will, then making itself tiresome by the working of a secret press. Maria Vetroff was known to be of a bright, courageous, and energetic character; but on February 12/24, 1897, after only a month's internment, she died a horrible death by burning in her cell, immediately after a long visit from a Government agent of dubious character. Probably the details of this tragedy, as of so many others, will never be accurately known. It is like enough that,

as the prison officials say, Miss Vetroff died by her own act ; it is at least as certain that the real cause of her death was, in the words of one of her friends, "some dreadful iniquity," the nature of which can only be guessed. So, at least, thousands of students and workpeople in Petersburg concluded, and the indignation demonstration in the Kazan Cathedral on March 4/16, 1897, brought together one of the largest concourses of people that has ever been seen in the city.

These, and like to these, are the ghostly figures that fill my vision in the courtyards and the little cathedral of Petropavlovsk. Brave souls ! they have carried the revolutionary spirit to heights unknown in any other country, in any other time, undreamed of to the childish anarchism of the South, or even by our own solid, thorough-going Puritan regicides. A hundred romances of supreme abnegation, read in cold print, or heard from the hot lips of some who shared the fight, rise fresh in my memory. Faces of large, rough men and of beautiful women people the air, and a spasm of pity wrings from me again and again the cry, *cui bono* ?

The Petersburg of twenty years ago sent out this forlorn hope ; to-day it is all despair and lethargy. Right surely reaches the scaffold, wrong is more secure than ever on its bloody throne. How long, Lord ? Is it for this we have inoculated the youth of the East with the ideals and discontents of the younger West ? Is it for this we scattered the poetry of Byron and Shelley, and Darwin's science, and Spencer's philosophy upon the west wind, to help

fertilise the thin surface-soil of -educated Russia? Will the Intelligence we prize so dearly, perhaps so falsely, never break through this long eclipse of light and liberty? Or can it possibly be true, after all, as the great teacher says, that force cannot kill force, nor evil cure evil; that all this heroism is wrong-headed and futile; that the real revolution which will bring in the new Russia is passing to deeper purpose on another stage, where science and art are counted a mockery, heroics of every kind a delusion, and personality a snare?

And as I wondered thus, prison and barracks and churches were blotted out, and there seemed to rise between me and the soft sun and the gleaming river a vast pavilion, into which hundreds of men and some women streamed—poor, work-worn men and women for the most part, but with a new gleam of hope on their rude faces. Once more Russia had her *Zemsky Sobor*, her popular assembly. . . . Two speakers held the ear of all. The first was a youth in student's garb, a familiar figure to whom I warmed from the first; as the noble poetry of revolt poured white-hot from his white lips, many faces shone responsively, and many voices acclaimed him, though the mass remained inert. The second is a strange old man in sheepskin; he, too, fluent, but in another tongue; he, too, poetic, but with the poetry of the forest and steppe, and the eastern *izba*: parables and sayings which flash diamond-like from many surfaces. He, too, is acclaimed by some, and the mass is perhaps more nearly touched. The excitement grows. The two men are speaking at once, and apparently against

each other. "Strike for liberty!" cries the lad. "Strive for holiness," pleads the old *mujik*; "be good, and ye shall be free." "See our brothers in the West; face the light and raise the flag of social revolution." "Nay, for the only light, the greatest revolution, comes from within. In your heart and your history lie weapons stronger than bomb and barricade. Refuse to do evil and the evil will fall." Then at the climax of the contest a city workman leaps to the front and tries to bring the two men together, to join their hands. I long to cheer, to help him. I, too, leap forward . . . and then I wake to the old, sad realities—the prison and barracks behind, and the gleaming Neva before, across which the cathedral bells are chiming out "God save the Tsar."

* * *

We stand, a few alien atoms, among the four or five thousand worshippers who fill the huge cruciform Temple of the Saviour in Moscow; *stand*, mark you! for there are no aids to bodily laziness, no provisions for respectable posturing, among the congregations of the Eastern Church. Worshippers? Well, at any rate those around us, and they were mostly of the "common" folk, showed an unwearied attention to the long-drawn-out ritual. Possibly it is more a matter of watching, less one of sharing, than in the Western communions. No books were visible, yet every one seemed able to textually follow the interminable liturgy.

Again, I am in wonderment. In England we hear only of Tolstoy and even extremer heretics. In

Moscow (more than in Westminster, Canterbury, or Norwich) the casual observer might be excused for supposing the State Church to be a greater success than ever, and quite safe in her servile attachment to the temporal power. This building cost two millions sterling, which was found by private subscription. Where at home have we a congregation of six or seven thousand people, as may be frequently seen in some of the Russian cathedrals? It were folly to generalise too confidently from these passing glimpses; but some main impressions, for which indeed other studies are largely responsible, are at least an advance upon that common summing-up (which explains nothing) of these strange phenomena of a new religious world as superstition with a crust of stupid sacerdotalism. In the first place we are among a people with whom life runs to passion as absorbingly as it ran to intelligence with the old Greeks, and as it runs to practical action in our colder Germanic and Protestant blood. They are a people of great emotions, above all of great spiritual emotions. In intelligence children (albeit with the best of children's wit, precocity, naivety, keenness of observation), in action limited to the narrow channel of a hard monotonous existence, they seem in revenge to have tried every note in the gamut of human feeling. To this root-characteristic all their greatest achievements, all that is native in their little art-world, especially their genius for music, is attributable. Their pastors and masters owe their success in no small measure to their recognition and acceptance of it. Rubinstein's great opera, "The Demon," as I saw it in the English

provinces, had no effect upon my stolid countrymen, but it was a revelation preparatory to what I saw and heard in the Temple of the Saviour in Moscow. The services of the Russian Church are the daily spectacles by which the popular emotion is trapped and drugged into contentment with the existing social order. It can at least be said for this process that it is much better than the Roman arena, and, for that matter, than the shows in Drury Lane and Leicester Square with which the cockney clerk whips up his debilitated senses. There is no likelihood, as there was a certainty in Rome, and is in London, of the simple elemental problems of life and death being overlaid with cheap sentiment and trivial decoration. The *mujik's* problems are no less vital and hardly more complicated or numerous than those covered by the Mosaic code, the psalms of David, the parables of Jesus, the Sophoclean tragedies, Chaucer's tales, the allegories of John Bunyan, and the heavenly tournaments that Milton sang. History is for him limited to the Christian tradition and the legends of the Church; the book of nature is the one he knows most of. Priests, soldiers, and bureaucrats having for a thousand years back kept the best abilities of his fathers in close tutelage, there has been until yesterday (and that is to-morrow for him, poor fellow), none of that differentiation of the dramatic instinct, and branching off through the miracle and morality play into the independent and highly developed theatre and opera, which since the Reformation have played so large a part in the development of the Western intelligence. For him, as a rule, the Church

is still all history and philosophy and art ; temple and theatre and concert hall rolled into one ; or rather undivided, undifferentiated, preserved in their ancient integrity, and on the spectacular side aggrandised as they can never have been before or elsewhere. The triumphs of Covent Garden and St. Paul's—I speak for myself—pale before the splendour of this daily passion-play in the Temple of the Saviour. The movement of the priests in their gold and scarlet robes within the iconostas must be largely incomprehensible to the foreigner, who can only feel dimly that to that stage-mystery all the rest—the shimmer of light upon marbles, frescoes, and mosaics, the brilliant icons, the great candelabra, the overhanging darkness of the vast dome, the infinitely varied exercise of antiphonous choruses, perched up in little galleries beside the altar—are but accessories, contributory elements toward one marvellous central effect. Beside the choral singing, with its long-drawn cadences, its exquisite harmonies and gradations of volume, all the undreamed resources of the single voice, especially the bass, are here called out ; and when the final notes of beatific exultation are reached, he would indeed be of stony make in whose breast there ran no responsive thrill. There is no shallow, prosy sermonising ; it is one long, unbroken appeal through the senses to the emotions, backed by a statecraft as astute as that of Rome in its zenith, and vastly more powerful.

The difference and the hope lie in the substance of the Slavic nature. For behind these sensitive emotions lie the reserves of spiritual experience, the

deep moral strata of a race in which, through strife-ful centuries, the mysticism and superstition of the Finn, the restless fanaticism of Tartar and Turk, have been completely fused into the patient, kindly, laborious, unselfish, essentially democratic character of the original Aryan stock. It is only in remembering the difference of history and daily experience that one catches an undertone of reality, of consistency with the common current life, in this spectacle which is conspicuously lacking in the grandest product of Western spectacular art, the Wagnerian drama, to wit—just in proportion as the life of these simple toilers is nearer to that of the Jews and the early Christians than the life of the modern Londoner is to that of Tristan and the Vikings, the knights of the Grail, and St. Elizabeth, and the singers of Nuremberg. What epical touch is there in the life of the consumptive mill-hand of Lancashire, or in the mind of the fleshy *bourgeoisie* or anæmic *dilettanti* of London? But the Russian peasant has at least one classic epic by heart, and under all the rubbish that covers it in the orthodox ritual there lies a reality to which he the more easily pierces because it is also the sublimation of the deepest things of his own simple experience. I find this second great race-characteristic as plainly in my exile friends and in those other exiles whom I did not see—Sonya Kovalevsky, even the poor little Bashkirtseff, and the grand charlatan H. P. Blavatsky—as in those typical street scenes of which a group of *stranniki* is an inevitable part. Every Russian who has not been demoralised by commerce or officialism is a pilgrim. He cannot help it; it is

a hunger deeper than consciousness, an impulse larger than reason. He is born with this fever in his blood ; he is a foredoomed truth-seeker. But the truth he seeks is not an abstract, but a concrete thing, a consistency not in logic but in life, the rule of holiness here and now, and not merely in some dim ideal kingdom of heaven. So native shrewdness outruns the Higher Criticism, and the *mujik* sees and hears his passion-play not from without but from within ; not from any dress circle or private box, but from the bar of awakened conscience. Covent Garden and Bayreuth are barns of Philistinism beside the Temple of the Saviour. Every great poet of the West has striven to recover for us this sense of the elemental realities. What else took Shelley back to Prometheus, and Tennyson to King Arthur ; what took Rousseau and Wordsworth, Whitman and Ibsen out into the wilderness, back to the childhood of mankind, or down into the ranks of the despised mob ? And what have all these achieved ? What is there in our carefully-cultivated objective interests that is better than the common heritage of the *mujik* and the despised *ryot* of our Indian dependency ? Superstition ? I do not forget ; there is an awful mass of it under the Russo-Greek Church. But there is superstition and superstition ; and it may be doubted whether the superstitions of London are not more fatal than those of Moscow. There is a superstition of Intelligence and a superstition of Progress ; indeed, one begins to wonder where the genuine article has got to amid the dessicated and oppressive conventions of Western civilisation. Little that is

good can be said for the hierarchy of the Russian Church—its corruption and incapacities for the higher ministry are proverbial ; but as for the millions who outwardly conform, it is a different question. The evidence of vitality in their paganised Christianity or Christianised paganism is overwhelming. Beneath the dead symbolism, the gaudy mummary of the monastic houses, the icon-worship, the feasting and fasting, the all-encompassing ignorance, there lies a solid base of persistent religious faith, often bearing strangely beautiful fruit. One promising sign is the common popular distinction between priests and principles, and even between theology and religion, which partly accounts for the large departures from the orthodox fold and for the fact that the Russian peasant is at once more religious and less priest-ridden than his fellows in any Catholic country. If we look to the growing minority of heretics, our hopefulness is quickly stimulated. When the last extravagance of the more conservative or simply eccentric sects has been rehearsed, Russian Nonconformity can show a devotion to high principle, a stout resistance to or a ready self-sacrifice before reigning force, even a reliance upon the light of reason and the individual conscience, which in the circumstances must be pronounced to be without superior in human history. The amalgam of corrupt Byzantine theology and primitive nature - worship strikes the superficial observer as a degrading compromise ; but there are indications that it may lead, though by strange paths—as it has already led some of the older sectarians, the Dukhobortsy for instance, and more especially

the newer movements of the Stundists and Sutayefftsy—to a religious synthesis as high as that of the Quakers and Unitarians of our own favoured land. If this promise be in any measure fulfilled, the State, as it exists, will be shaken to its base. As the double pressure of a barbaric East and a hostile West is weakened, and the long isolation of the people is broken down, the *raison d'être* of civil supremacy in the Church, as of autocracy in the State, will be gone, and there will be a chance for the emergence of the sentiment of liberty and free thought in both spheres. Then, and hardly before, will the dark age of stagnation and obscurantism come to an end. Already there is perhaps as much religious rationalism and applied Christianity in Russia as in all the rest of Europe. The measure of popular education which cannot be long delayed will stir the nation to its depths, and it is not impossible that the close of another century may see this people leading the vanguard of European thought, and pouring into the wearied minds of the older races the long-hoarded treasures of its own emotional life.

* * *

Tired by a long railway journey, we were delighted to find at Rybinsk, on the Upper Volga, a comfortable steamer of the American stern-wheel two-decker pattern, well found in homely fare, for the trip of three hundred miles down stream to Nijni Novgorod. No uneventful passage was ever fuller of meaning than that to the wanderer over whom, for the first time, Russia began to exert, not through books but in person, her inexplicable witchery. The Englishman

of to-day can only feebly imagine what a country may owe to its rivers, for we have always had the sea, and now railways are netted all over our little land. No one can picture Russia without her Mississippi. The Volga made Russia, and is even yet a main artery of her economic life. The physical conditions to which it owed its importance as one of the great routes of primitive trade, and then as the line of conquest of the Slavic princes, still give it the place of a real seaboard. Even in this day of rapid railway extension it remains the grand road through vast tracts of unbroken country, the road by which the Ural iron reaches the Moscow foundries, and the fertile South sends her corn in exchange for the no less necessary timber of the North. This predominance cannot last. In the economy of the modern state, the water course, unless it tap a country rich in minerals, is quickly supplanted by the iron road. Russia only seems to be, but is not, an exception to the general course of industrial evolution in Europe. At last she is awaking, rapidly and unmistakably, from her long Middle Age. A new South is rising over the coal and iron basins of Donetsk and Ekaterinburg; a new North, living in cities, labouring in factories, impelled by steam and electricity, fills the old-time Muscovite with foreboding of some terrific and incalculable change. Even the Volga has its crop of factories; its historic cities—Tver, Yaroslav, Kostroma, Nijni Novgorod, Kazan—which rose from the wreckage of the Tartar invasion when it became again the base of national expansion and colonisation, find themselves threatened to-day by a foe more

insidious, a domination more overwhelming. Political revolution may be strangled, religious revolution delayed, but man's consciousness and will are only one factor in economic forces which pursue their course with inexorable directness. We see the process in full swing at Nijni ; where also is painted for us, in a kaleidoscopic series of crude colour changes, that larger encounter of West and East which is going on along the whole crescent from here to Morocco, the old tide-mark of Mongol and Mussulman conquest : the East being represented for the nonce by the hucksterers of the ancient Fair, Armenians, Kurds, Circassians, Turkomans, Persians, Hindoos, even Chinamen ; the West being set forth, at the " Pan-Russian " Exhibition, by such " fruits of enlightenment " as factory machinery, Red-Cross appliances, field-guns, and warship models. I saw all this with rising impatience, bought a bundle of Tolstoy's tales, for as many farthings, in the tract-form which the peasants buy, at a kiosk ; and set my mind to a more concrete problem, my face to a simpler scene.

Even if the Western spirit were presented in more ideal forms than these, there is no purely industrial development which can compensate, for many years to come, if ever, for the decay of agriculture, for that succession of disasters which has lately wrought havoc in the staple occupation of the people. Here we are in that middle zone of European Russia—stretching on the one hand to the industrial region of Moscow, on the other to and through the Urals—in which the northern forests and the southern prairies and wheat

lands meet. It is the northern end of the realm of the terrible destroyers—famine, cholera, plague. Mr. Brayley Hodgetts, who, as Reuter's correspondent, was here during the great famine of '91, gave a woeful picture of this very district, telling of hopeless arrears of taxation and wholesale losses of farm stock ; of a bondage worse than the serfdom of thirty years ago ; of feasts of mushrooms, tares, and husks ; of suicides of workless and despairing peasant-fathers ; of lordly usurers and heartless officials ; and behind all a "deliberate policy of the Government, to keep the peasant in a state of barbarism and poverty." I look over these rolling prairies, and recall the Bourbons and their end. Woe to those who grind the face of the poor ! This is not a famine year, and we see no such extreme results ; but, with time for reflection and a feeling that England is thousands of miles or centuries of time distant, we do get some enlightening hints of the more permanent conditions, historical, racial, climatic, economic, which have moulded the Russian people, from their greatest genius to the obscurest of all their teeming millions.

Stand on the bluffs which slope up from the broad sandy foreshore to any of the village-ports of the Volga. What a sense of space one gets in a typical Russian landscape ! The heavens seem to dilate under the bright sunshine ; breezes, fresh with the breath of Arctic ice, carry a flotilla of bellying clouds along an immense horizon. Stillness and silence—a silence too serene to be oppressive—brood over the whole prospect, enhancing this illusion of vastness. Save for an occasional flight of wildfowl, there is no

sign of life. Harvest, generally of rye, oats, barley, or flax, is over ; and in many of the villages old men, women, and children are left alone for the long winter days, while the grown men get work in the nearest factory-town. Below, the broad stream takes its way, smooth and strong, dotted here and there with strings of wooden barges—real floating villages some of them—rafts of uncut logs, and now and then a local ferry-boat. For mile after mile on one bank extend dark forests of fir, pine, and birch. On the other, the ridge is capped by a succession of hamlets, a dozen wooden huts to each, with a windmill or a river-navigation signal set on the higher points. Behind us lies the town, wooden from end to end, with the poor exception of the tower of the fire-watchman—a sort of stone sermon on the plâgue which they call here the red rooster. The colourist will remark how wonderfully the white walls, green or brown roofs, and blue or gilded cupolas of the churches befit this lucid and tranquil scene. A line of droshkies lies in wait for the invisible wayfarer, the bundle of dry goods which answers to the cry of “*izvoschik !*” slumbering serenely at the tail of his gallant little pony. An unkempt *mujik* in inverted sheepskin crosses the dusty cobbled expanse which is the main street ; and a group of women, swathed and tanned almost beyond recognition, bent on some pilgrimage of labour, or perhaps of piety, passes down to the steamboat pier. There the human ant-colony is busy loading and unloading for the new factory hard by. A score of labourers, meagre, ragged, bare-chested to the keen wind, or with no better protection than a red cotton shirt, run

up and down the gangway, bearing huge bales and packages with indescribable verve and earnestness. The Mongol stamp is plain on many a face, but with a certain transmutation. What is it in these rough figures, these furrowed but not unsaintly features, that has drawn great and spirited men, and delicate, cultured women to abandon the greatness and delicacy and culture of the city in order to share this desolation, and that even now knocks upon the innermost door of my frozen Western heart with the cry, "Brother, open!"? There is no rest, no shirking in their brute toil. I see nothing of the large "independence" of the London docker, none of the self-respectability inculcated by the egregious Mr. Smiles—only an inexhaustible willingness, and an indescribable something that reminds one of Hay's "Christ before Pilate" in the Tretiakoff Gallery. Ah! country of the seared face and giant's heart: what ages of penury and slave-service have taught this utter devotion to the meanest task! What sufferings, harder than Job's, pass daily within these wooden cabins or under this coldly smiling sky! What unutterable pathos sobs itself out in the low, lilting chant of the Volga gangsmen! It is the vesper hymn of the temple of eternal toil, the unphrased *magnificat* of endlessly patient wrestling with the life-giving earth under the free winds of heaven. We of another world know it most familiarly in the pages of Tolstoy, the marvellous artist, and in his gospel of salvation by loving labour. But Tolstoy (does some hurried reader think I am long in coming to him?)—what is Tolstoy? A rock of hope, no doubt, alike for poor and rich, for

Gurth the swineherd, and for Faust amid the broken fragments of his too, too hollow culture ; an old man of simple faith, vigorous will, vast knowledge of human nature ; a king in literature, and a humble servant of the poor in the slums of Moscow and the log huts of Ryazan ; in naked worth perhaps the greatest soul now alive on this earth—yet still a pilgrim of pilgrims, and sick with the sickness of his people. Just one man ; yet not one, but many : a people incarnate. I never saw him, yet I always saw him—in the old fortress, in the great cathedral, and now again in the company of the Volga stevedores. For this *is* the unknown quantity men call Russia : an immeasurable devotion, an immeasurable patience, an immeasurable industry, an immeasurable hunger for holiness. And the heart of Russia is Leo Tolstoy. Some day this people, touched into intelligent self-consciousness, will learn to know and be all that lies in that great heart ; and it will be good to live in that day of resurrection.

II

CHILDHOOD

A HUNDRED miles due south of Moscow, and ten miles beyond Tula on the old highway to the Troitsa monastery and so on to Kursk and the Crimea, lie, amid a gently undulating country of alternating field and forest, the village and estate of Yasnaya Polyana (Fairfield), the home of the Tolstoys. The estate, which is now about 2,500 acres—partly arable and partly wooded—in extent, has been considerably added to since it was given by the Empress Catherine to the present Count's ancestor, General Tolstoy, a son of the first Count, who was Peter's ambassador to Turkey. In the old days when it was surrounded by a castellated rampart it must have resembled an outpost of the Wild West in pioneering days ; but now it has, to English and American eyes at least, a less impressive appearance. Every Western visitor remarks upon its neglected aspect. "We came to a pair of circular pillars at the end of an avenue," says Mr. Stevens. "Both pillars and avenue seemed sadly neglected, to one accustomed to the neatness of

England and America. The former were in decay, and the latter were overgrown with weeds and vagabond tree shoots. We seemed to be entering the domain of fallen grandeur. On the plastered wall of a tumble-down little lodge near the pillars was chalked in Russian, 'Come to the House.' It was a white, two-storey structure of stone and wood—a roomy though unpretentious abode. The only striking feature about it was a very broad veranda, with rude carvings of horses and birds on the railings."¹ Mr. Kennan's impression was similar:² "There was not the slightest evidence anywhere of care, cultivation, or pride in the appearance of the grounds." The house is "a plain, white, rectangular two-storey building of stuccoed brick. It would be hard to imagine a simpler, barer, less pretentious place. It has neither piazzas nor towers, nor architectural ornaments of any kind; there were no vines to soften its hard, rectangular outlines, or relieve the staring whiteness of its flat walls." Mr. Stead's "net impression,"³ was one of luxuriant wildness.

"The house is barely visible through the trees from the highway, from which it stands at a distance of about a mile. The ground slopes downward to a little stream and rises again in a slight acclivity, close to the summit of which, at the end of a lordly avenue, stands the white country house of Count Tolstoy. The roof, like all Russian roofs, is of painted sheet-iron; in

¹ "Across Russia on a Mustang."

² "My Visit to Count Tolstoy." By George Kennan. *Century Magazine*.

³ "Truth about Russia." By W. T. Stead.

front of the house stands a raised platform of stone. On the first floor there is a balcony with a veranda. The trees overshadow the house at one end. At the other there is a small flower garden and an open space where the boys played at croquet. . . . Behind the house stood an open space, in the centre of which was an aged tree with maimed branches. Under it the pilgrims stood in picturesque groups waiting the appearance of the Count. . . . The kitchen-garden and a very extensive orchard lay behind the house. In the front, to the east, stood a summer-house, clean, airy, and comfortable. At the end of another small avenue leading to the village, which lay on the rising ground on the other side of the stream, was the country villa of a Petersburg judge who married Countess Tolstoy's sister. Further on again was the farmyard with the cows, the poultry, and the horses. . . . In front of the house lay the ponds, of which there were three—one large pond where people bathed and the villagers washed their clothes; two smaller ones in which the bull-frogs kept up an incessant chorus. . . . The larger pond is very pretty, surrounded as it is with great trees in the shade of which nestle one or two picturesque cottages. . . . All round the house spread the woods crossed by bridle-paths in the most embarrassing confusion. . . . About two or three miles from the house stands the church, which with its cupolas forms a conspicuous object in the landscape. It is at the far end of the second village on the estate."

Such is the scene on which Count Lyef Nicholayevitch Tolstoy was born on August 28 (O.S.), 1828, and where he has spent the greater part of his life. His father, Count Nicholas Tolstoy, had served in the Pavlograd regiment of huzzars, was made prisoner by the French in the campaign of 1812, and afterwards retired with the rank of lieutenant-colonel. He was an average member of the old Russian nobility, handsome and happy-go-lucky. Here is his son's unsparing picture of him in "Childhood and Youth" (chap. x.):—

"He was a man of the last century and, like all his contemporaries, he had in him something chivalrous, enterprising, self-possessed, amiable, a passion for pleasure. He felt a great contempt for the present generation. . . . His two great passions were cards and women. In course of his life he had gained or lost millions at cards, and he had been in love with innumerable women of all classes. A well-shaped and dignified figure, a rather strange gait, a habit of shrugging the shoulders, small eyes which always looked as if he were smiling, a large aquiline nose, irregular lips, a sort of lisp, and a bald head—such is my father as I remember him. Though he had never belonged to the highest circles of society he had always kept the best company and had always been esteemed by all. His hobby was the fashionable connections which he had formed partly through his marriage with my mother and partly through friends of his youth. . . . His disposition was one of those which require spectators in order to do a good deed, and he only valued or esteemed what was valued or esteemed by others. It is very difficult to say if he had any moral convictions. His life was so full of all kinds of impulse that he had no time to think about convictions, and besides, he had been so happy all his life that he did not feel it necessary to do so."

Other personal traits will be discovered under the guise of Nicholas Rostoff in "War and Peace." As the father died before the son was ten years of age, it will be seen that these passages have an interest not only in themselves and in relation to the question of heredity, but as evidence of the discernment and the inexorable memory which have served the great writer from his earliest youth.

Very different is the idea he gives us of his mother. She died when he was too young to grasp these externalities, but through the mist of his worshipful recollections—whether in numerous passages in "Childhood," or in various figures in his chief novels

—we catch glimpses of a much more attractive personality ; and it is clearly from her side that he received his chief endowment.

“When I try to recall to mind my mother as she was then only her brown eyes arise before me, always the same look of love and kindness in them ; the little mole on her neck, a little lower than the little curls at the back of her head ; her embroidered white collar ; her dry, soft hand, which caressed me so often and which I loved to kiss. . . . When my mother smiled her face grew still prettier, and all looked bright around her. If during the most trying moments of my life I could have caught a glimpse of her smile, I should not have known what grief is.”

Mr. Behrs, in his “Recollections,” says there is a distinct likeness between the Count and his maternal grandfather, and even the far-back Montenegrin prince who founded the Volkonsky family.

“Childhood” (written 1852), from which I have quoted, is not exactly or formally an autobiography, but it is only in the outward landmarks and common-places of date and place that it does not follow the author’s own life. In essence it is an autobiography of a very original and wonderful kind ; even if we did not know that it was written while youth and its memory was still fresh, there is witness of its authenticity in every chapter. The happy, boyish years pass before us like a panorama as we read these long, but never wearisome, and often deeply poignant or delicately picturesque pages. We see a patriarchal home, distantly suggestive of Virginia in the slave days, with its multitude of servants—the major-domo, the faithful old German tutor (for

German and French were then not simply what Latin and Greek have been in our own universities ; they were also the current coin of intercourse in Russian Society), the steward, valet, man-nurse, maid-servants, the sisters' governess, a dependent idiot lad, Natalia, the old serf who was insulted at the offer of emancipation, coachmen, huntsmen, and a hazy background of peasants in bright cottons, working in the fields, or gathered to watch the family coach roll off to take father and children for a visit to Moscow. A passage in which is described the sight of an itinerant fanatic in a state of religious ecstasy, praying in the moonlight, ends significantly :—

“Years have gone by since that time. Many a remembrance of the past has lost its importance and has become but a confused fancy for me. Even the wanderer Greasha has long ended his pilgrimage ; but the impression produced upon me by him, and the feeling aroused in me, will never die out of my memory. Oh, Greasha ! thou good Christian . . . how greatly didst thou glorify His greatness when, unable to find any words, thou didst fall on the ground with tears !

“The emotion with which I listened to Greasha could not last long—in the first place because my curiosity was satisfied ; in the second because I had a cramp in my foot from sitting so long, and I wanted to take part in the whispering and romping which were heard in the dark lumber-room behind me.”

An utterly happy and tranquil childhood.

“On coming upstairs into my room and standing in my little wadded dressing-gown before the holy image, how earnestly did I repeat the words : ‘God bless my father and mother ! Then taking my pet toys, a china rabbit and a dog, and putting them into a corner of my bed under my pillow, I rejoice to see how comfortably they lie there . . . and I fall quietly asleep,

my face yet wet with tears. Will the freshness, carelessness, love, and faith of childhood, ever return to us?" (asks the disillusioned youth of twenty-five). "What better time can there be than that in which the two highest virtues, an innocent light-heartedness and an infinite need of love, are the only impulses of life?"

His mother's death breaks into and ends this idyll of childhood ; and henceforth, at least till middle age, there is a deepening note of morbidness in his thought and acts. If there is anything of stoical self-possession in the older Tolstoy it has only been achieved after long and painful struggle.

"I could not believe it was her face. I looked fixedly at it and by degrees began to recognise in it the dear familiar features. I shuddered when I did so and knew that this *something* was my mother. But why had her closed eyes sunk thus into her head? Why was she so dreadfully pale ; and why was a dark spot visible through her transparent skin on one of her cheeks? Why was the expression of her face so stern and so cold? Why were her lips so bloodless and their lines so fair, so grand? Why did they express such unearthly calmness that a cold shiver passed through me as I looked at them? . . .

"Both before the funeral and after it I did not cease to weep and feel melancholy ; but I do not like to remember it, because a feeling of self-love mingled with all its manifestations ; either a desire to show that I was more afflicted than the rest, or thoughts about the impression I produced upon others ; or idle curiosity which made me examine Mimi's cap or the faces of those around me. . . .

"Amongst the last who approached the body was a peasant's wife ; she had a pretty little girl of about five years old in her arms ; God knows why she brought her there. At that moment I had dropped my wet kerchief on to the floor, and was just going to pick it up, when as I stooped to do so, a shrill scream was heard, expressive of such terror that were I to live a

hundred years I should never be able to forget it. The child, waving her little arms and throwing back her frightened little face, was staring at my mother's features and uttering a succession of violent shrieks. I too uttered a cry, which I think must have been more dreadful than that which had struck me, and ran hastily out of the room. . . ."

He wakes into a new and altogether less pleasant life in the aristocratic circle of his maternal grandmother in Moscow—Frenchified Russians and Russified Germans for the most part, full of idleness and all banality. There was a momentary feeling of expansion: "For the first time I saw clearly that we—that is to say our family—were not the only beings in the world, that all the interests of life did not turn upon us alone, but that there existed another life, that of people who had nothing in common with us, who did not care or trouble themselves about us, and that many had not even any idea of our existence." But the precocious and sensitive lad was now to learn how great a solitude there may be in a large family amidst a great city; and what it means to be, as he afterwards pathetically said, "always alone in the search for the good." His father became less and less to him; his sister and her friends began to have their own secrets and aims; the elder brother, who remained his favourite to his death, had also, withal his "happy, nobly frank disposition," his own occupations; his new tutor, a French prig, only inspired detestation; almost every one else was too old or otherwise too far removed for comradeship. He was thrown more and more back upon himself, and with himself he was by no means in love. His plain-

ness of feature was always a cause of torment in his strained and brooding mind.

"I was often under the influence of despair. I fancied that there could be no more happiness in the world for a man with such a large nose, such thick lips, and small grey eyes as I had. I prayed for some miracle that would transform me into a handsome man." "I was bashful by nature, but my bashfulness was increased by a conviction of my plainness. I feel convinced that nothing has as powerful an influence upon a man's manners as his outward appearance, and not so much his appearance even as his conviction of its being either attractive or the reverse." (In his sixteenth year): "I could not say that my face was expressive, intelligent, or noble-looking. There was nothing expressive in it—the most ordinary, gross, and unsightly features; and my small gray eyes, especially when I looked into the mirror, seemed rather stupid than clever; there was nothing manly about me; though I was not short of stature and was very strong for my age, all my features were soft, flat, and meaningless. And there was even nothing noble-looking in me; on the contrary my face was like that of a common peasant. I had large feet and hands, and at that time I felt very much ashamed of them."

After the father's sudden death in 1837, the family was taken charge of at first by his sister, the Countess Alexandra Osten-Saken, and in 1840 by a relative of their mother, Pelagia I. Yushkova, who lived in Kazan. It is to this period that the nineteenth chapter of "Childhood" must relate. "For the space of a whole year," there writes the budding sceptic and misanthrope, "during which I led a solitary moral life, concentrated in myself, various abstract questions concerning the destiny of man, the next world, the immortality of the soul, had presented themselves to

my mind, and my weak, childish intellect had tried with all the eagerness of inexperience to understand all those problems which form the highest point to which the mind of man can attain, but which the power to solve has not been given him. . . . At one time it occurred to me that happiness did not depend on outward causes, but upon the way we considered them ; that a man who had grown used to suffering could never more be truly miserable ; and in order to get myself inured to labour I used to hold Tatischeff's dictionary in my outstretched hand for five minutes, or would go into a closet and scourge my bare back with a rope so severely that the tears would flow down my cheeks." At another time the unhappy orphan would play the epicurean, lying on his bed for days together "reading a novel and eating gingerbread bought with the last money I possessed." Then scepticism brought him, he assures us, "almost to the verge of madness." "I came to the same conclusion as Schelling, that things did not really exist except as I myself gave them being in my own mind. . . . My fondness for meditation on abstract questions developed my meditative faculties to such a degree that I used on thinking of the simplest thing to fall into a maze, analysing my own thoughts and entirely losing sight of the question which had occupied them at the outset. . . . My mind was going astray."

A boyish sentimental friendship with one whom he calls Dimitri Nekliudoff (who reappears in "A Russian Proprietor"), and the work of preparing—"unwillingly and reluctantly"—for the University,

brought some light and air into this unwholesome life. "Under the influence of Nekliudoff," he says, "I voluntarily adopted his tendency to an enthusiastic worship of an ideal of virtue, and his conviction that the main purpose of life was constant improvement. At that time it seemed to us a feasible thing to improve humanity and to extirpate all human vices and sufferings ; it seemed such a simple, easy thing to amend our own faults, to acquire every virtue, and to be happy." It was as though spring had broken through the icy doors of his solitary heart even as it was wont to break with sudden and irresistible force over the plains of his fatherland. "Everything spoke to me about beauty, happiness, and virtue ; told me that one was as easily attainable and as possible as the other ; that one cannot exist without the other, and even that beauty, happiness, and virtue were all one and the same. 'How was it that I did not understand it before ? How wicked I must have been ! how good and happy I can be in future !' said I to myself. 'Quick ! quick ! from this very moment I must become another man and begin another life.' " Tolstoy's life was evidently foredoomed to a frequent turning-over of new leaves ; but the dear fellow would have been terribly taken aback in this moment of ecstasy could he have foreseen the day when, in the name of his "new life," he would scoff at the "Baumgartenian Trinity" of the good, the true, and the beautiful, as a confused notion inherited from pre-Christian savages, and maintained only as a gloss for the selfish and degrading luxury of modern Babylonia ! His day-dreams during this optimist

episode, he tells us, "were based on four sentiments : love of Her, the imaginary woman . . . the desire of being known and loved by everybody . . . the hope of some extraordinary happiness—such a strong and firm hope that it almost degenerated into madness . . . and fourthly and chiefly, dissatisfaction with myself and repentance, but a repentance so closely connected with the hope of happiness that there was no selfishness in it." The quaint candour and the complete absence of vulgarity in these juvenile confessions raise them well out of the category of common neurotics ; and there is a redeeming vein of gentle humour—witness the delightful account of the visit to the monastery for confession—which suggests, what indeed is the truth from beginning to end, that in his gravest or most morbid moments the artist has always kept a grip upon the saint and prophet in this dual personality.

Tolstoy entered the University of Kazan in 1843. He describes at length his preliminary examinations, his chums, his visits to grand relations (perhaps the duller pages he has ever written) in "Childhood and Youth." Impervious to the ambitions of scholarship and research, unimpressed by the provincial aristocracy, too nice to enjoy the rough revels of the students, and repelled alike from aristocrats, professors, and students by an unsocial and what, with our English emphasis on government we should call an unregulated disposition, he seems to have had during these two or three years a thoroughly unhappy and unprofitable experience. One must

beware of Tolstoy's judgments upon himself, and the statement that "the principal reason why no friendship could subsist" between himself and his fellow-students "was that my coat was made of cloth costing 37 roubles per yard, while I had a gig of my own and wore shirts made of fine Holland linen," is probably a very unjudicial account of the matter; but that the chief reason of his friendlessness lay within himself is clear enough. He is fuller than ever of morbid egotism. Thanks, as he says, to "the way in which I was brought up and the society in which I was placed," his highest ideal, save during occasional spasms of self-humiliation, was the *comme il faut*, which he describes as consisting "first and chiefly in speaking French well, and especially with correct pronunciation. . . The second condition was to wear the nails long, well-shaped, and clean; the third was to know how to bow, to dance, and to converse; the fourth, and a very important one, was a perfect indifference to everything and a constant expression of a certain exquisite contemptuous weariness."

It is only when — having left the University, against the pleas of rector and professors, without graduating—he is back in the old country home, which has passed to him in the division of the family property, that we notice a recovery of moral health. He is "passionately fond of music," and spends months in breaking in his thick fingers, though he has nothing better to operate upon than "the productions of those sweet composers whose pieces every person of good taste would pick out of a heap of beautiful things in a music-shop and would say: 'this

is what we ought never to play, for nothing worse, more tasteless, more absurd has ever been written on music paper.'” He revels in French fiction, Sue, Dumas, Paul de Kock, dramatising every scene in his mind and always enjoying the *éclat* of the great heroes. Above all, Nature plays freely upon his impressionable mind. Society, with its deadly conventions, meant nothing in the fields and woods of Yasnaya Polyana — new worlds opened themselves before the eyes of the long-imprisoned orphan ; youth and freedom seemed to give the key to every mystery that need be faced. Sufficient for the day was the joy thereof. It was the dawn of vigorous manhood. “Childhood and Youth” is within easy reach of the English reader, but I cannot refrain from quoting from a chapter in which the blossoming of this artist-soul is celebrated in phrases of supreme beauty :—

“I would dress myself quickly, take a towel under my arm and a French novel, and go to bathe in the river under the shade of a birch wood, which was half a mile from our house. There I used to lie down in the shade on the grass and read, now and then taking my eyes off the book in order to glance at the purple surface of the shaded stream, rippling in the morning breeze ; at the field of ripening rye on the other bank of the river ; at the morning light of the sun, still slightly red, as he cast his rays lower and lower upon the white trunks of the birch-trees, which, hiding themselves one behind the other, disappeared in the far distance of the dense woods, and I rejoiced in the consciousness of possessing the same fresh, young strength of life with which all nature breathed around me. . . .

“Sometimes I went into the orchard and right into the middle of a high, densely overgrown, bushy raspberry-shrub.

Above my head the bright glowing sky, around me the pale-green, prickly foliage of the raspberry-bushes, intermixed with weeds. . . . Amid these bushes it is always damp ; there is a smell of spiders' webs, of fallen apples, which lie rotting on the damp ground ; of raspberries, and frequently of cherries, which you sometimes happen to swallow by accident together with a berry, and then quickly eat another berry to drive away the unpleasant taste. As you walk along you rouse the sparrows that always live in this covert ; you hear their busy twittering and the rustling of their little wings against the twigs ; you hear in one direction the humming of a drone-bee, and in another the gardener's footsteps resound along the pathway, or those of Akim, the idiot, with his incessant mumbling. I say to myself, ' No ! neither he nor anybody in the world will ever find me out here.' . . . With both hands I pick the juicy berries right and left from the white stalks, and swallow one after the other. My feet are wet through ; my head is full of absurd fancies ; my hands and legs smart from the nettles ; the sunbeams straight above my head pierce through the thicket and scorch it ; I can eat no more, but still sit in the thicket looking, listening, thinking, and unconsciously plucking and swallowing the best berries.

"After supper, and after an evening walk with somebody in the garden—I was afraid to walk alone in the dark avenues—I would go to bed. I slept on the floor in the veranda—a circumstance which afforded me unbounded satisfaction, notwithstanding the millions of gnats that stung me most unmercifully. On moonlit nights I frequently passed hour after hour sitting on my mattress, gazing fixedly at the light and shadows, enjoying the perfect quietness around, letting my fancy roam at will, dreaming of the poetical happiness of passionate love, which then seemed to me the greatest happiness in the world, and grieving that up to that time I could only enjoy it in fancy. . . . At every sound of bare footsteps, at every cough or sigh, at every closing of a window or rustling of a dress, I would jump out of my bed, listen stealthily, watch, and grow excited without any obvious reason. And now the lights disappear from the upper windows, the sounds of steps and talking are succeeded by snoring ; the watchman's rattle is heard ; the garden has become more gloomy and lighter at the same time,

as soon as streaks of red light thrown on it from the windows have disappeared ; the last light from the butler's room passes into the entrance-hall, casting rays of light along the dewy garden, and I can see through the window the hunch-backed figure of Foka, a candle in his hand, going up to bed. . . .

"Everything looked so different then—the old birch-trees glistening on one side in the moonlit sky, with their curly branches, on the other dimly sheathing the shrubs and the pathway with their dark shades. And the calm, stately trees, the glitter of the pond, and the moonlit sparkle of the dewdrops on the flowers in front of the veranda, which threw their graceful shadows across the dark border of the flower-bed ; the sound of a quail beyond the pond, a human voice on the mainroad, and the calm, hushed creaking of two old birch-trees standing close to each other ; the humming of a gnat over my ear under the blanket, and the falling of an apple, after catching at a branch, on the dry leaves ; the noise of the frogs, which sometimes come close to the terrace, and look so mysteriously bright in the moonlight, with their greenish backs—all assumed a strange character in my eyes, a character of great beauty and of incomplete happiness. And now *she* would appear before me with her long, dark tresses, her rounded shape, pensive and beautiful with her bare arms and voluptuous embraces. She loved me, and for one minute of her love I would sacrifice my whole life. But the moon rose higher and higher, and became lighter and lighter in the sky ; the splendid glittering of the pond and of the dewdrops grew clearer and clearer, the shadows grew darker and darker, the light more and more limpid, and while watching and listening to all this, a voice whispered to me that even *she*, with her bare arms and her passionate embraces, was not true happiness, that love for her was not full bliss ; and the more I looked at the high, full moon, the higher and higher, purer and purer, did true beauty and bliss appear, and nearer and nearer I drew to Him who is the Source of all that is beautiful and good, and tears of unsatisfied but agitating joy filled my eyes.

"And still I was alone, and it seemed to me that Nature, in her mysterious grandeur drawing towards herself the bright light of the moon—which for some reason remained in some distant vague spot in the pale-blue sky, and yet was every-

where, and seemed to fill the entire unbounded expanse—and I, an insignificant worm, already contaminated by all the littleness, the foulness, of human passions, but with unbounded power of love—it seemed to me at that time as if Nature, the moon, and myself were one and the same.”

III

ARMS, ART, AND THE TIME-SPIRIT

IF atmosphere, "distance," background, perspective, be necessary to the portrait of the hero or teacher whose life in some measure we share, how much more necessary are they to the realisation of a strange character beating its music out in a far and little-known land. If they are necessary to the picture of the man of action, whose public deeds are the plain milestones of his career, how much more so to the story of such a soul-development as that of Tolstoy, marked by few striking outward events, and not a little obscure even after all his prolific writings have been ransacked for autobiographical clues. Before going further, therefore, we must inquire briefly what was his outer environment, the influences beyond those of family, that played upon him during the formative period of his youth; what was the physiognomy of the society into which he was launched; what special circumstances of the period have a clear bearing upon his mental evolution; what was Russia, and what was Europe, in 1850?

All the West was a spent volcano. It was perhaps

the blackest depth of the gulf between Waterloo and Sevastopol. Forty-eight had come and gone ; Owen, St. Simon, Fourier had been succeeded by Proudhon, Marx, Rodbertus ; Kossuth, Mazzini, Louis Blanc, Lassalle had aroused the legions of King Demos ; and what better were the peoples for all their revolutionary fevers, their golden visions of national independence, social liberty, and constitutional government ? German unionism, Austrian separatism, the nationalism of Italy and Poland, international Radicalism—what was achieved of all this *mélange* of dreams and despair ? The mushroom crop of kings and princes, still battenning merrily upon the ruins of the Napoleonic power, trembled for a moment, then swiftly recovered as they bethought them how much easier it is to deal with blind millions than with one Doomful Man. In France, since the *coup d'état*, Louis Napoleon was virtually Emperor already. By 1851 the German revolution, though with some slight gains in constitutional reform, was, on the side of national unity, a total failure. In Italy the *risorgimento* was only a rather pretentious part of the general miscarriage, resulting in deeper misery, financial straits, foreign garrisons, a harder temper on the part of the governments against the press and liberal ideas. Poland had lost her independence in 1847. The Austrian Court was triumphant over every one of its enemies ; its Jonah, Metternich, even he had come safely up from the deep sea and was posing as martyr and seer in the reactionary *salons* of Vienna. When Nicholas marched a Russian army through the Carpathians and saved the house of

Hapsburg by suppressing the Magyars, the insufficiency of nationalism was plainly apparent. And as nationalism became bankrupt in life, as faith in republicanism or any other mere system of government began to droop, so romanticism in art and transcendentalism in religion and philosophy succumbed before the rapid advances of the rationalistic and realistic spirit. It was in that time of bitter disappointment that the first gropings after a new line of popular concentration were made. Militant socialism was born ; the "class war" was to succeed to the strife of nations ; the flag of "social revolution" was unfurled. In Russia that could have little or no meaning as yet. Even in the West it was only a beginning ; a new start, for all practical purposes, and especially in its economic aspects ; though historically a recovery of the cosmopolitan temper of Kant, Goethe, Rousseau, which had prevailed throughout Europe at the end of the eighteenth century, only to be swamped in the anti-Napoleonic reaction. For the nonce, the people were beaten all along the line. Never was tyranny more widely triumphant. The Courts took a new lease of life ; bureaucracy and the upper *bourgeoisie* divided the heritage of the old aristocrats, making a much stronger barrier against the "lower orders." England alone could profit by the general confusion, and made every land her tributary.

Blackest of all was the outlook in Russia. Nicholas was the reactionary despot *par excellence*, as Peter had been the despotic progressist ; both were internationalists in the wrong sense (Russian life was nothing to Nicholas beside the fate of a brother emperor) :

neither had any fancy for Byzantinism ; it was their lack of scruple and their exclusive command of Western resources that enabled them to maintain their personal power. Nicholas was as much stronger than any European ruler of his time as his subjects were weaker and more helpless than any European people. From this period dates the establishment of the famous " Third Section " of secret and political police, the laws against the Old Believers and heretics generally, the edicts of Russification directed against the Uniats of Lithuania, the Catholics of Poland, and the Protestants of the Baltic Provinces. The numbers of students at the Universities were restricted to a few hundreds ; new rigors of the censorship were invented ; passage across the European frontiers was all but prohibited. The economic life of the people was frost-bound. There was hardly a pretence of popular education. The knout was in full swing. Serfdom must always spell stagnation ; but this was slavery at its worst. Watched with suspicion from above, with hatred from below, the very few cultivated and capable nobles who did not follow the fashion in entering the service of the State might almost be forgiven for shirking the routine duties of landlordism, and seeking oblivion abroad or in the hollow society of the two capitals. Those who, like the great statesman Kosheleff and the great artist Tolstoy, dared to think the betterment of country life a worthy task were regarded as a slightly superior class of social lepers. Hence a general reign of ignorance, stupidity, and brutality among the country population—and that was ninety-five per cent. of the whole.

In the cities, every good and healthy influence had been crushed out ; the silliest of French and German conceits usurped the place of culture ; purely selfish enterprise, or secret societies of little promise, absorbed the energies which would have built up a free civic life. Even the Slavophiles fully recognised all this at first ; and what has been called the " Slavophil confession of faith "—a series of answers given to the police by Ivan Aksakoff upon his arrest in 1849—may be consulted as an indictment of the existing *régime*, though otherwise full of bad history and bad philosophy.

What hope did Russian genius give of relief from this oppression ; what contribution did it make to the general upheaval of 1848 ? Little enough, truly. The last strike for liberty and its punishment were a quarter of a century behind ; but many a family of substantial standing was still represented in the mines and convict settlements of Siberia. Astonishment had deepened into panic, and panic into complete torpor, as Nicholas pursued his stubborn policy of repression and isolation from the Liberal West. For the ruck of Society, as it was said, Adam Smith had been succeeded by the French quadrille. Then there were memories of the disastrous failure of the Polish rising of 1830–32, to stimulate the fears bred of daily experience in Petersburg and Moscow. Nevertheless, there was a certain movement of spirits, responsive on the one hand to native literary developments, and on the other to the influence of the great stars of German philosophy, especially Hegel and Schelling. This movement took two main directions. Pushkin

and Lermontoff, the fathers of romanticism in Russia, were dead ten years earlier, both victims of their ancient half-belief that, after all, the sword is really greater than the pen. With Byelinsky, prince of social and literary criticism, Russian radicalism was born. Gogol—roughly corresponding to Dickens and Thackeray in England, to Sue and Balzac in France—helped the new stream of tendency with his keen wit and irresistible satire, his democratic sympathies, and his instinct toward plain, common, real things; and bequeathed to Turgueneff, Dostoyevsky, Pissemsky, and, later still to Goncharoff and Saltikoff, his great legacy—the Russian novel. The yet more radical “Western” wing—of which Herzen was the acknowledged and powerful leader, even when he had no better rostrum than a little printing office in London; to which that eccentric figure Bakunin belonged for a time; and the heritage of which fell to Tchernichevsky—was rather indebted to its studies in Berlin and to the earlier Parisian Socialists. Opposite to these stood the Aksakoff family, with Khomiakoff, Yuri Samurin, the Kirievskys, and the other Slavophiles. These were narrow nationalists, orthodox Moscovites, hopeful only of patriotic tradition and the old Byzantine theology. At first, indeed, there was a strong democratic and anti-individualist vein in their thought, but this was soon lost in the prevailing spirit of reaction. They had a common origin with the “Westerners,” were members of the same secret circles, and at the outset fast friends. Both parties looked away from the existing order—the one to the national past, the

other to the international ideal and its partial embodiment in European culture and freedom ; the one to religion and art, the other to science and philosophy. If the ruling powers, which were equally indifferent to both, had not seen that the logical ending of the Moscow party was in the brutal and cynical statecraft of Count Dimitri Tolstoy, they would have had the same end also—the choice of exile, prison, or death. The house of the Aksakoffs, the Mecca of Slavophilism, was for a time watched closely by the police, and Ivan was actually arrested and imprisoned for a few days in 1849. The “Westerners,” especially after the revolutions of 1848 had knocked all reason and kindness out of the Tsar’s head, suffered more severely. Premature death rescued Byelinsky from the clutches of the police in 1848. Herzen had fled abroad in the preceding year, and never attempted to return. Bakunin, mad product of a mad *régime*, lit the fire of revolution in the West, and did not learn to repent in the Petersburg fortress or in Siberia. The gentle Turgueneff, after writing a perfectly innocent obituary article on Gogol, was arrested, imprisoned for a month in the capital, and tied for a couple of years to his estate ; not being a fighting man, he spent the greater part of his subsequent life abroad. Dostoyevsky, already celebrated as the author of “Poor Folk,” still less of a politician than Turgueneff, was arrested in 1849 as a member of a circle which had dared to discuss the abolition of serfdom, the censorship, and other administrative abuses. He was actually condemned to be shot, but

was reprieved on the scaffold, and dragged away, shaved and chained, to Siberia, and there thrust for nine years into the horrible existence which he has described in "Recollections of the House of the Dead." In brief, political life had become absolutely impossible. The press was gagged more tightly than ever. A high and impenetrable fence blocked the whole line of intelligent public activity. So intense had the prevailing despair become at the outbreak of the Crimean War that the idea of a Russian defeat was positively welcomed by a large portion of the educated classes as the last hope for a better future.¹

Tolstoy is sometimes contrasted with Turgueneff, as representing the one the Oriental, the other the Occidental side of Russian character; but, at least till it is more closely defined, there does not seem to me to be much value in this distinction, which may easily mislead the unwary reader. To be a rebel is not necessarily to be a Westerner; nor to be a Christian, an Oriental. It would probably be more true to say that Tolstoy's instinctive trend, like the historic *rôle* of his countrymen, has been in the direction of a new

¹ "It looked as if we should at last be released from our dreary prison-house and brought to a point of vantage where, although we might not enjoy the free air of heaven, we might at least feel a refreshing breeze. The landing of the troops of the Western Powers in the Crimea, the battles of Alma and Inkermann and the siege of Sebastopol caused us no great grief, for we were convinced that even a defeat would be more tolerable and useful to Russia than the continuance of the situation in which the Empire had been for some years."—Alexander Koshelev's *Memoirs*; quoted in Samson-Himmelsstierna's "Russia Under Alexander III.," p. 212.

synthesis of the Eastern and Western spirits. In addition to the social circumstances which gave young Leo his first impulsion away from city life into the midst of the peasantry, and which, in showing the impossibility of political activity, helped to form from the beginning a non-political and even anti-political bias, we have sought to recall the fact that, having presented to him, in common with every intelligent youth of the early fifties, a party choice, he deliberately evaded it, and gradually struck out a middle line of his own, drawing thereto, as with the loadstone of genius, so much of ultra-nationalist as well as Western thought as proved to be accordant with the then little known capacities of the Russian people. The extravagances of neo-Byzantinism only repelled him, and so undoubtedly delayed his spiritual evolution. No doubt, he was of an unsocial and even a cranky disposition ; no doubt he was yet lacking the courage that comes only of a positive faith. Egotism, however, does not explain the inability of the Carlyles, Emersons, Ruskins, Whitmans, Ibsens, Tolstoys, to limit themselves to the shibboleths of the schools. He hungered after a native and personal revelation, but one which at the same time would go down to the deep things common to all men ; that would bring health not only to himself, but to those old friends Ivan Ivanovitch, and Natalia the serf, and even the fanatic Greesha. He knew his dead mother for a greater saviour than the icy, unreal, despotic Christ of the Orthodox Church. Moscow was for him little more than the seat of an effete aristocracy and the mausoleum of the early tsars. All his young sympa-

thies were toward the Liberal side ; but criticism and conspiracy are not the food on which such a nature is built up, and Russian radicalism had hardly yet got beyond that point. The later Nihilists grudged Turgueneff to art and Tolstoy to religion ; Turgueneff grudged Tolstoy to religion, and Tolstoy grudged Turgueneff to art. To the foreign spectator these seem all bound together in the roots of their being—there is just this much truth in De Vogüé's claim to discover "Nihilism at its source" in Tolstoy's early work, although so far as it is true it requires the abandonment of the old notion of "Nihilism." All these men may be said to have been Nihilists in the sense that they were rebels against the existing social order. In the narrower ordinary sense of violent destruction and blank negation, Nihilism is utterly alien to the Russian nature, and has figured less in the history of Russia than in that of any other European country. They are all rebels, the great men and women of this dark land ; but rebellion may take many forms. If Turgueneff has revealed Russia to the West, Tolstoy has revealed Russia to itself—a more important matter. And in the central stage of this struggle for a better social state—the return to nature, the "going among the people," to learn as well as to teach—Tolstoy, albeit in his own individual fashion, may claim to have led the vanguard of the Russian youth.

Such being his environment, it goes almost without saying that the vapours of youthful romanticism were soon dispelled. One of his first short stories, "A Russian Proprietor" (called in the original "The

Landlord's Morning, a fragment of an unfinished novel"), tells the disappointments and discouragements which the young Prince Nekliudoff meets when, having left the University without graduating, he begins to try to carry out all manner of fine plans for the improvement of the condition of his serfs. This was evidently a reminiscence of Tolstoy's own life at Yasnaya Polyana between his student and his soldier days; and the little episode suggests an immediate reason for the next step. A home visit of his elder brother Nicholas, then a captain in the 4th Battalion of the 20th Artillery, serving at one of the outposts in the Caucasus, gave Leo the needed opportunity, and in 1851 he enlisted in the same regiment as cadet or ensign. The Caucasus was to the educated Russian of that time all that Byron's Greece, Scott's Highlands, Wordsworth's Lakes, Fenimore Cooper's Wild West were to our fathers. It was Freedom and Nature, with very big capitals, and a touch of patriotic swashbucklery for spice. For two years Tolstoy threw himself with complete abandon into this strange experience, fought lustily when the Circassian tribesmen became troublesome, entered fully into the life of the little Cossack post on the Terek river, lost heavily at cards, as seems fitting to the young *noblesse*, hunted with the rugged mountaineers, and fraternised with their women and children. About this Olympus of Russian poetry, drinking in the blazing sunbeams and the winds that come cool from the high mountains, the need to write grew with the growth of physical vigour and the intensity of the mental solitude. After beginning

"Childhood and Youth" (which was only to be published in its complete form six years later), he wrote "The Cossacks"; and three short stories composed about the same time—"The Invaders," "The Wood-cutting Expedition," and "Meeting an Old Acquaintance"—are also fruit of his sojourn in the Caucasus.

Turgueneff once described "The Cossacks" as "the best novel written in our language." It is at any rate a splendid piece of work, reminiscent in the overture of Pushkin and Lermontoff, but quickly carrying us far beyond that ancient Byronic company and its pretty lyricism. It is a prose epic of the contact of civilised and savage man. The interest of the problem may be to us mainly a personal one; but to Russians in that day, and even in this of rapid Imperial expansion, it has a very wide application. There is much magnificent detail, descriptions of steppe, forest, and mountain, whose voices "cover and support the voice of man as the orchestra directs the singing of the chorus"; love scenes, hunting scenes, fighting scenes. While there is no cant of "art for art's sake" on the one hand, there is no moral posturing on the other. It is Whitman anticipated, with an art that Whitman never knew. The gradual realisation of the supremacy of the root instincts of human nature and of the folly of trying to disguise them in the garb of the refined or theatrical is repeated before the reader's eyes. Olyenin, the feeble child of the city, is everywhere at a disadvantage in the mountains, dwarfed by such figures as Yeroshka the colossal hunter, with his great animal body and mind of an infant; even by the old horse-thief, exhaling "a strong but not

unpleasant odour mingled of fresh wine, vodka, powder, and dried blood " ; especially by the vigorous beauty of Marianka, and the shrewdness and pitiless courage of the Cossack Lukashka. " Ah ! " he cries, " if I could become like Lukashka, could steal horses, could drink *tchikhir* wine, could sing songs, shoot people, creep under her window at night when drunk without any thought of what I am or why I exist—that would be another matter. Then we might understand each other ; then I might be happy. . . . What is the most terrible and most delightful thing with me is the feeling that I understand Marianka while she will never understand me. It is not because she is inferior to me that she does not understand me ; on the contrary, she ought not to understand me. She is happy ; she, like Nature itself, is beautiful, calm, and absolutely self-contained." A doubtful half-truth, thinks some sagacious reader ! A half-truth, indeed, but not at all doubtful ; nay, vastly important to every modern, and to that particular person in that particular place and time all important.

More serious matters than guerilla warfare with border tribes were now afoot. Russia was watched more vigilantly than ever before by the Western Powers. Hated by Liberals as a despot, suspected of the basest designs on Turkey and even upon India, the Emperor Nicholas had no sooner got Austria on her legs than he found himself in collision with England and Turkey about the Hungarian refugees, and with France and Turkey about the " Holy Places." Again he proposed, as he had done seven or eight

years before, an Anglo-Russian agreement, and again he was rebuffed. If England objected to the break-up of the Ottoman Empire, it was rather to prevent a huge aggrandisement of the Tsardom, than from any objection to its being "broken up into republics to afford a refuge to the Mazzinis and Kossuths of Europe." Then, Menschikoff having been outwitted by Stratford de Redcliffe, Nicholas sent an army to occupy the Danubian provinces. To this force, which by Midsummer of 1853 was encamped in Moldavia and Wallachia, Tolstoy asked to be transferred. The request was allowed, and he was appointed to a place on the staff of Prince Gortchakoff. The British and French fleets were now ordered to Besika Bay. Palmerston hurried things on; the Turks were resolved upon war, and the French were hardly less eager. When Russia, in reply to the Turkish attack in the Principalities, destroyed the Ottoman fleet at Sinope, the intervention of the Western Powers was assured. England and France declared war on March 27, 1854; the Principalities were evacuated by Russia on the demand of Austria (such is political gratitude!), and on September 14th the allies landed in the Crimea. Tolstoy, who had taken part in the early fighting and the retreat of the Russian army to Yassy, was transferred to Sevastopol, where he was at first attached to a field battery, and with this he served through the terrible winter campaign. In May, 1855, he was appointed to the rank of divisional commander. He was present at the battle of Tchernaya (August 4th), and the storming of Sevastopol (August 8th), and was then sent to Petersburg with

despatches. While in the beleaguered town he was a frequent visitor at the house of the commander-in-chief; but he declined to take advantage of the family relationship to obtain a higher command or a less arduous post, and continued to serve as battery commander and to take his full share of the hardships of the campaign. Mr. Behrs says that a song which he composed in celebration of "The Eighth of September," became widely popular in the Russian army. Throughout this rough experience he was accompanied by his serf Alexis (the Aloscha of his Sketches). At the close of the campaign he left the army, with the rank of lieutenant of artillery.

We know little more of his life during the war than is told in the three sketches "Sevastopol in December, 1854," "In May, 1855," "In August, 1855," which, after appearing separately in the Radical *Contemporary* (*Souremennik*) were published together in 1856, and at once made their author's literary reputation. There is little doubt, however, that this awful experience not only nipped in the bud his slight romantic tendencies, the false heroics, the glorification of physical vigour, but it finally determined the line of his after-development. It gave him an abiding horror of war, an abiding suspicion of thoughtless patriotism, a sheaf of ghastly memories of butchery and death. There is a sickening sensation which climbers know when, after creeping painfully onward through the mist or the darkness, there is suddenly a break in the cloud, or the moon rises, and they see falling straight away from their feet a sheer precipice into which a single

further step would have hurled them. Life in a besieged town is a daily repetition of that experience. Tolstoy makes no sort of diarist; if one gets in his narratives ninety-nine intimate things that the ordinary man would have missed, one misses the one outer fact which would have linked him on to the every-day life of his fellows. It has therefore been said that his sketches are formless, inchoate; but that is very superficial criticism. The vertebra of all Tolstoy's work is—Tolstoy. Get some knowledge of the man, and you will see that the appearance of confusion and inequality is due to the fact that we have not accepted, or even tried, the artist's point of view; we have been trying to see a strange world from a bad position through a wrongly-focussed glass. Recall the social circumstances which I have briefly traced, and the extraordinary fact that this young soldier never for a moment falls into the cant of patriotism becomes comprehensible. Every responsible Englishman now regards the Crimean War as a crime. To Russians also it was a crime; but it was something else. It was the death-bed—in the person of Nicholas himself literally the death-bed—of a *régime* of brutal obscurantism, and the bloody birth-place of a new national hope. Let the heartless and senseless slave of a vulgar press portray the battlefield as he may for the amusement of the slaves of a vulgar commercialism. The prophets and artists see things otherwise. To them the official version of things—the general's designs and manœuvres, the coming and going of much-decorated officers, the capture of a position here, the repulse there, the fine practice of

such and such a battery, the statistics of killed and wounded, the frenzy of the final assault—will not be the things of real note. In the eyes of a Tolstoy, a Garshin, a Verestchagin, least of all: for them the very heart of the tragedy is the crucifixion of the conscript-serf, who has no word and no interest in the making of the war, and has but the haziest idea why he is being compelled to slay his brethren of another land. All else sinks into nothingness beside this major *motif* of a Russian war; and amid the snows of the Crimea there was the added poignancy of the thought that the heroism was all on the side of the common soldier, the incapacity all on that of the corrupt and stupid ruling class which exploited him for its own purposes. In a measure these are, no doubt, the universal features of war, and so far Tolstoy's philosophy of history, and especially of military history, is a true philosophy. Its special truth, however, is for his own time and country, where heroism can only appear in the mass, because man as man is not officially recognised, and the exceptional man, unless he subserve the ruling interests, is not tolerated. So much for the point of view and for the world-wide humanitarian interest of these sketches. But no less supreme are they as achievements in descriptive art. The thrilling effect depends here not upon tricks of penmanship, command of the vocabulary, careful stagecraft, but on the author's faculty of convincing the reader, firstly of his absolute truthfulness, and then more gradually of the significance of all these at first sight insignificant episodes. "Who is the villain, who the hero of my tale?" he asks at

the end of the second book ; and he replies, " All are good and all are evil. . . . The hero of my tale whom I love with all the strength of my soul, whom I have tried to set forth in all his beauty, and who has always been, is, and always will be, most beautiful, is—Truth." More wonderful pictures of the routine of war have never been painted ; and if they at once established their author's place among the intellectual forces of his own country, much more deeply and widely should they influence the peoples who, while flattering themselves upon a further advance in education and self-government, have made Europe into a vast armed camp, and have carried an example of hate and violence to all ends of the earth.

" The flush of morning has but just begun to tinge the sky above Sapun Mountain ; the dark blue surface of the sea has already cast aside the shades of night and awaits the first ray to begin a play of merry gleams ; cold and mist are wafted from the bay ; there is no snow—all is black, but the morning frost pinches the face and crackles underfoot, and the far-off, unceasing roar of the sea, broken now and then by the thunder of the firing in Sevastopol, alone disturbs the calm of the morning. It is dark on board the ships ; it has just struck eight bells. Toward the north the activity of the day begins gradually to replace the nocturnal quiet ; here the relief guard have passed clanking their arms, there the doctor is already hastening to the hospital, further on the soldier has crept out of his earth hut and is washing his sunburnt face in ice-encrusted water, and, turning towards the crimsoning east, crosses himself quickly as he prays to God ; yonder a tall and heavy camel-wagon drags creaking to the cemetery, to bury the bloody dead, with whom it is laden nearly to the top.

* * *

" In that room they are applying bandages and performing

operations. There, you will see doctors with their arms blood-stained above the elbow, and with pale, stern faces, busied about a cot, upon which, with eyes widely opened, and uttering, as in delirium, incoherent, sometimes simple and touching words, lies a wounded man under the influence of chloroform. The doctors are busy with the repulsive but beneficent work of amputation. You see the sharp, curved knife enter the healthy, white body, you see the wounded man suddenly regain consciousness with a piercing cry and curses, you see the army surgeon fling the amputated arm into a corner; you see another wounded man, lying in a litter in the same compartment, shrink convulsively and groan as he gazes at the operation upon his comrade, not so much from physical pain as from the moral torture of anticipation. You behold the frightful, soul-stirring scenes; you behold war, not from its conventional, beautiful, and brilliant side, with music and drum-beat, with fluttering flags and galloping generals, but you behold war in its real aspect—in blood, in suffering, in death.

* * *

“Mikhaïloff and Praskukhin threw themselves on the ground. Praskukhin shut his eyes, and only heard the bomb crash against the hard earth somewhere in the vicinity. . . . A cold horror, which excluded every other thought and feeling, took possession of his whole being. He covered his face with his hands. Another second passed—a second in which a whole world of thoughts, feelings, hopes, and memories flashed through his mind.

“Which will be killed, Mikhaïloff or I? Or both together? And if it is I, where will it strike? If in the head, then all is over with me; but if in the leg they will cut it off, and I shall ask them to be sure to give me chloroform,—and I may still remain among the living. But perhaps no one but Mikhaïloff will be killed; then I will relate how we were walking along together, and how he was killed and his blood spurted over me. No, it is nearer to me . . . it will kill me!’

“Then he remembered the twenty roubles which he owed Mikhaïloff, and recalled another debt in Petersburg, which ought to have been paid long ago; the gypsy air which he had sung

the previous evening recurred to him. . . . 'But perhaps it will not burst,' he thought, and with the decision of despair he tried to open his eyes. But at that instant, through the crevice of his eyelids, his eyes were smitten with a red fire, and something struck him in the centre of the breast, with a frightful crash; he ran off, he knew not whither, stumbled over his sword, which had got between his legs, and fell over on his side.

"'Thank God! I am only bruised,' was his first thought, and he tried to touch his breast with his hands; but his arms seemed fettered, and pincers were pressing his head. The soldiers flitted before his eyes and he unconsciously counted them: 'One, two, three soldiers; and there is an officer wrapped up in his cloak,' he thought. . . . He wanted to shout to them that he was bruised; but his mouth was so dry that his tongue clove to his palate, and he was tortured by a frightful thirst. . . . He groaned so terribly that it frightened him to hear himself. Then more red fires flashed in his eyes—and it seemed to him as though the soldiers were laying stones on him; the fires danced more and more rarely, the stones which they piled on him oppressed him more and more.

"He exerted all his strength in order to cast off the stones; he stretched himself out, and no longer saw or heard or thought or felt anything. He had been killed on the spot by a splinter of shell in the middle of the breast.

* * *

"Hundreds of bodies, freshly smeared with blood, of men who two hours previously had been filled with divers lofty or petty hopes and desires, now lay with stiffened limbs, in the dewy, flowery valley which separated the bastion from the trench, and on the level floor of the chapel for the dead in Sevastopol; hundreds of men crawled, twisted, and groaned with curses and prayers on their parched lips, some amid the corpses in the flower-strewn vale, others on stretchers, on cots, and on the blood-stained floor of the hospital. And still, as on the days preceeding, the dawn glowed over Sapun Mountain, the twinkling stars paled, the white mist spread abroad from the dark sounding sea, the red glow illuminated the east, long

crimson cloudlets darted across the blue horizon ; and still, as on days preceding, the powerful, all-beautiful sun rose up, giving promise of joy, love, and happiness to all who dwell in the world."

IV

WANDER-YEARS : TURGUENEFF AND TOLSTOY

THE end of the war, the death of Nicholas, and the accession of his reputedly liberal son, Alexander II., were the signs for a brief revival of intellectual activity in which Tolstoy, now in touch with the leading literary and artistic circles of the capital, at once became a noticed figure. He has described in his fragment, "The Decembrists," both the excitant effect of the war upon Russian society and his own welcome at its hands. The mere fact that he planned a novel on the subject of the revolt of 1825 illustrates his rebel sympathies, as well as the hopefulness that beat in every Russian heart on the morning of the new reign ; but the irony of the following and other passages shows how little likely it was that that hopefulness would satisfy his own larger demands:—

"From all sides new questions sprang up ; people wrote, read, discussed, prepared schemes intended to reform everything, to destroy everything, to change everything. All Russians, as one exultant man, were the prey of an indescribable enthusiasm, an

exaltation that Russia has known twice in the nineteenth century—firstly, when in 1812 we conquered Napoleon I., secondly, when in 1856 Napoleon III. conquered us. It was the memorable epoch of the regeneration of the Russian people. . . As the Frenchman said that he had not lived who had not gone through the great French Revolution, so I dare to say that he who has not lived in Russia during the year 1856 does not know what life is. The writer of these lines not only lived then, but he was one of the actors of the time. Not only did he live some time in one of the casemates of Sevastopol, but he wrote on the Crimean War a work which brought him much glory. . . After having taken part in these events, he returned to the heart of the empire, where he received laurels in recompense for his exploits. He saw the ecstasy of the two capitals and of the whole people, and he proved by personal experience that Russia knows how to reward true merit. All the great ones of the earth sought his acquaintance, shook hands with him, offered him banquets, insistently invited him to their houses to learn from his lips details of the war, and to make him share their emotion. That is why the writer is in a position to appreciate this celebrated, this memorable epoch. But that is another story.”

It was not only the mental incompatibilities of which I have spoken that prevented Tolstoy from losing himself in this ferment, though his quick perception evidently showed him how premature and how unpromising were some of the new dreams and panaceas. It was not only—though this was more important—that the conventions of city Society were utterly repugnant to him: how much so may be guessed from the fact that the following slight impression has remained in his memory from that time down to the present year:—

“I remember how Gontcharoff, the author, a very sensible and educated man, but a thorough townsman and an æsthete,

said to me that after Turgueneff there was nothing left to write about in the life of the lower classes. It was all used up. The life of working people seemed to him so simple that Turgueneff's peasant stories had used up all there was to describe. The life of our wealthy people, with their amorousness and dissatisfaction with their lives, seemed to him full of inexhaustible subject-matter. One hero kissed his lady on her palm, and another on her elbow, and a third somewhere else. One man is discontented through idleness, and another because people don't love him. And Gontcharoff thought that in this sphere there is no end of variety."—"What is Art?"

Beside these phases of mind and temper he was moved by the exigence of a still more intimate and personal problem. There is no day so pure and bright but the bitter taste of last night's sin will rise in the mouth and kill the savour of the best of things. In his thirtieth year a half of Tolstoy's soul still lay dormant; and art alone does not suffice to keep a life clean, especially when the art has been recognised and taken to the unclean bosom of the world. A story like the "Recollections of a Billiard Marker"—of a rich young man being led by laziness, through gambling, to degradation and ruin—could hardly have been told save from personal experience, even if we had no such passages (exaggerated though they be in a perspective of thirty-five years) as the following from "My Confession":—

"I was young, I had passions, and I stood alone, altogether alone, in my search after virtue. Every time I tried to express the longings of my heart for a truly virtuous life, I was met with contempt and derisive laughter; but directly I gave way to the lowest of my passions I was praised and encouraged. . . My kind-hearted aunt, a really good woman, used to tell me there

was one thing above all others which she wished for me—an intrigue with a married woman: ‘*Rien ne forme un jeune homme comme une liason avec une femme comme il faut.*’ Another of her wishes for my happiness was that I should become an adjutant, and if possible to the Emperor; the greatest happiness of all for me, she thought, would be that I should find a wealthy bride, who would bring me as her dowry an enormous number of serfs.

“I cannot recall those years without a painful feeling of horror and loathing. I killed men in war, I lost at cards, wasted my substance wrung from my peasants, punished the latter cruelly, rioted with loose women, and deceived men. Lying, robbery, adultery of all kinds, drunkenness, violence, and murder, I committed all; and yet I was none the less considered by my equals a comparatively moral man.

“Such was my life during ten years. During that time I began to write, out of vanity, love of gain, and pride. . . . At twenty-six years of age, on the close of the war, I came to Petersburg and made the acquaintance of the authors of the day—I met with a hearty reception and much flattery. . . . The prejudices and views of life common to these writers issued, under the influence of the dissipation into which I plunged, in a theory of life which justified it. It was that life is a development, and the principal part in that development is played by ourselves, the thinkers, while among the thinkers the chief influence is again due to ourselves, the poets. Our vocation is to teach mankind. . . . I wrote and taught I know not what. For doing this I received large sums of money, I kept a splendid table, had an excellent lodging, associated with loose women, and received my friends handsomely; moreover I had fame. . . . But in the second, and especially in the third year of this way of life, I began to doubt the infallibility of this doctrine, and to examine it more closely. . . . I grew disgusted with mankind and with myself, and I understood that this belief which I had accepted was a delusion. Still I called myself a thinker, a poet, and a teacher. My self-confidence in teaching what I did not know amounted almost to insanity. . . . Hundreds of exhausted labourers worked day and night, setting up the type and printing millions of pages to be spread by the post all over Russia; and still we continued

to teach, unable to teach enough, angrily complaining the while that we were not listened to."

That this is a very unjust account of his writing the reader may easily satisfy himself by recalling that it was in the two years after the war that the Count concluded the narrative of his youth, and by reading the little idyll "Lucerne," the motive of which is given in the following paragraph printed near the end of the story :—

"On July 19, 1857, before the Schweitzerhof Hotel, in which there were staying many wealthy people, a wandering beggar-minstrel sang and played his guitar for half an hour. About a hundred people listened to him. The minstrel thrice asked them all to give him something. Not one gave him anything, and many made sport of him."

Probably this also is founded upon a real incident in Tolstoy's visit to the West and South of Europe ; and the sequel, in which we see the beggar feasting with the repentant nobleman, is too characteristic both of the man and of the Russian heart not to be true. Whether he is equally unjust to his own character in those days I have no knowledge, and in any case it would be as little useful as pleasant to pursue the question further. The general fact must, however, be put in evidence, for it is out of this morbid base that his more serious thought in the next few years grew.

Next in importance, but more complex in its influence, was his visit to Germany, France, England, and Italy in 1857. Of the English part of the journey I have found no record but this tiny episode

narrated in that thrilling little story of peasant life "Polikushka":—

"Not long ago I saw in the English House of Commons Lord Palmerston sitting with his hat pushed over his eyes all the time that a member of the Opposition was thundering against the Ministry, and then quietly rising proceed, in a speech of some two or three hours' length, to demolish one by one all the arguments of his opponent."

How far back "Old Pam" is from the English "Tolstoyist" of to-day!

It was during this journey that the young author came deeply under the influence of the philosophy of Schopenhauer, then still alive at Frankfort, though in his seventieth year—kept alive, one might almost say, by a daily growing stream of more or less stupid adulation. Much might be written of this influence, which is clearly reflected in his contemporary writing, and is perceptible long afterwards. The little parable of "Three Deaths"—which contrasts the respective ends of a querulous lady, her coachman, and an ash tree of which a cross is made for the peasant's grave—has been quoted as an instance of Russian "nihilism" and pessimism. I rather suspect that, if such it be, this pessimism, like much more of the Russian thought of the time, was "made in Germany" to suit the case of the victims of European despotism. *Vid* Frankfort from the Far East would perhaps be a more accurate description; at least the German brain had much to do with it. Amid their differences there were some strong features of Schopenhauer's method which were certain to im-

press Tolstoy: his constant appeal to daily experience, the boldness of his attack upon the orthodox figures of the philosophical world, his wonderful force and lucidity, his complete self-confidence and self-consistency. All Tolstoy's work bears the stamp of his own mind, but in much of it there is a noticeable harmony with Schopenhauer's criticisms of science and conventional religion, his revival and amalgamation of the moral principles of Christianity and Buddhism, and his insistence that the deeper reality of things is not in Intelligence but in a deeper force in nature, of which intelligence is only a minor and recently developed function. That the great Russian would in time work through and beyond Schopenhauer's definition of that deeper something as Will, to a fuller, tenderer conception, might have been postulated from the racial and personal traits of the two men. At that time, however, there was a community in their ideas which helps to account for the fact that Tolstoy, with all his radical tendencies, was never drawn into the ranks of Hegelian Liberalism.

One wonders whether, and to what extent, his views of woman and sex-relations were affected by those of the philosopher who threw the seamstress downstairs. It is at least noteworthy—even if we find a clue to its origin in certain family circumstances—that young Tolstoy's first work after this period, written after his own marriage be it remembered, should be in essentials (except that there is no "other man") an anticipation of "The Kreutzer Sonata" of thirty years later. "Family Happiness" is the story of a

marriage that failed, that of a young and vigorous girl (who narrates it) with her guardian, a good, solid, fatherly man. In the first place we have the romance of young love—a pure rural idyll.

“He taught me to look on all our dependents—peasants, domestics, maid-servants—in an entirely different way. Our garden, our woods, our fields, which I had known so long, suddenly acquired a new beauty in my eyes. Everything which, since childhood, had been inert around me suddenly became endowed with life. . . .

“In my room all was still; the only sounds were Katya’s deep, regular breathing, the clock ticking by her side, and that of my restless turning and murmured, broken words, or crossing myself and kissing the crucifix on my neck. The doors were closed, the shutters drawn, a fly or mosquito was buzzing somewhere; and I felt as if I should like always to stay in my little room, to have the morning for ever delay her coming, to retain for ever about me this spiritual atmosphere. It seemed to me that my dreams, my thoughts, and my prayers were living creatures abiding there with me in the darkness, flying about my bed, hovering over me; and every thought was his thought, every feeling his feeling. I did not know as yet that this was love—I thought that this state of feeling might continue for ever and for ever unreciprocated.”

They are married, and after only two months there comes the awakening, the killing frost.

“It was not that strenuous labour, the fulfilment of duty, self-renunciation, and life for others that I had imagined when I became his betrothed; it was, on the contrary, an absorbing, selfish affection for one another. . . .

“His perpetual self-complacency irritated me. My love had come to a standstill and ceased to grow. What I longed for was activity, not the calmness of a settled life; emotions, perils,

and self-renunciation instead of thought. . . . I was tormented by all the potentiality of labour and self-sacrifice."

The unhappy wife falls headlong into the pleasures of society in the capital. The breach of interests and occupations widens and widens till the curtain falls upon the burial of romance in a calm, platonic compact. The *dénouement* of the spiritual tragedy is told with a power which beats down the reader's sense of its impossibility. No significant detail is lost; every word tells, every turn of thought, every stirring of the cauldron of passion—we realise it all.

"“Let all be again as it used to be. It can be, can it not?’ I asked, looking into his eyes. But his eyes were bright and calm and gazed at me without showing their depths. Even while I said this I felt that what I desired and asked him for was an impossibility. . . . I stood silently near him and my mind became easier.

“‘Let us not try to repeat the experiment of life,’ said he. ‘Let us not deceive each other. There will be none of the old anxieties and agitations, and thank God for it! Sufficient happiness has fallen to our lot. . . . Now it is necessary for us to step aside and give room for some one to pass,’ he said, pointing to the nurse, who with Vanya came and stood at the terrace door. ‘And so it is, dear friend,’ he ended, drawing my head to his breast and kissing me on the hair. It was not a lover but an old friend who kissed me.

“And from the garden arose stronger and sweeter the fragrant coolness of the night, the sounds and the silence grew more triumphant, and the stars burned more brilliantly in the sky.

“I looked at him and my mind was suddenly calmed . . . and I understood clearly and serenely that the feeling of that time had passed irrevocably, like time itself; that now it would be not only impossible, but even hard and grievous, for it to return.”

Among the intellectual influences to which Tolstoy was open in this black decade two others must be named—Dickens, who was even then known in Russia and who has since had a great vogue, and Rousseau. With the latter Tolstoy had obvious points of contact—distaste for city life and luxury,¹ a reaction toward primitive conditions, and a general withdrawal of faith from outward seats of authority into the heart of the sovereign individual.

Two incidents of his visit to Paris may here be mentioned. One of these is noted in the following passage from the "Confession" :—

"My life in Europe and my acquaintance with many eminent and learned foreigners confirmed my belief in the doctrine of general perfectibility. . . . It may be summed up in the word 'progress.' It was only at rare intervals that my feeling, not my reason, were roused against the common superstition of our age. Thus, during my stay in Paris, the sight of a public execution revealed to me the weakness of my superstitious belief in progress. When I saw the head divided from the body and heard the sound with which they fell separately into the box, I understood, not with my reason, but with my whole being, that no theory of the wisdom of all established things, nor of progress, could justify such an act."

The other fact is his visit to Nicholas Turgueneff, the great novelist's cousin, well known as a Decembrist exile, a warm and statesmanlike partisan of

¹ Even in early middle life, according to Mr. Behrs (p. 53), he "was in no wise fastidious as to what he ate, could not sleep on a spring mattress, did not like a soft bed, and at one time slept on a leather-covered sofa."

Emancipation, and author of a standard work on "Russia and the Russians." Probably it was here that Tolstoy got the idea of writing a novel on the stillborn revolt of 1825. Oddly enough, one who saw him in Paris received the impression of "an accomplished man of the world, somewhat too much interested in spiritualism." Tolstoy's interest in spiritualism was to prove in after years of a very unfriendly kind.

If his diaries are ever given to the world one of the subjects of most serious curiosity will be any references to his chequered friendship with Ivan Turgueneff. Till then the world must be content with the fragments which Fêt (Shenshin), Annenkoff, and others, beside the two artists themselves, have revealed. Since the war they had been country neighbours, so long as the then famous author of "A Sportsman's Tales" was in Russia and at liberty. The qualification is necessary. Turgueneff, the Westerner, the Liberal, the artist, felt bitterly the political and social rigours of the last years of the Nicholas *régime*. "The surroundings, and above all this class to which I belonged—the landlord class, the serf-owners—offered nothing which could hold me," he wrote years afterwards. "On the contrary, nearly everything I saw around me troubled me, filled me with indignation, with contempt. I could not hesitate long. Either I must submit and follow obediently the common rut, or I must break away, repel everything and every one, even at the risk of losing many things near and dear to my heart. That is what I did." Turgueneff did not "repel every-

thing," he only mourned his dead master¹; but that was enough. Thanks to the admiration of the gaoler's daughters, he was allowed some little comfort during his brief imprisonment, and it was then he wrote "Moumou," of which Carlyle said he had never read anything more touching. "My health is good," wrote the prisoner, "but I am ridiculously aged; I could send you a lock of hair.² . . . My life is finished; there is no longer any charm in it. I have eaten all my white bread; let us chew what remains twice and pray to Heaven that it may be very good."

An experience like this must have appealed strongly to Tolstoy, and for a time the gentleness of the older man prevailed over the wild and, as Garshin deposes, the often exasperating spirit of the younger. The following letter of Turgueneff's sufficiently explains itself. It is dated November, 1856, two years after his punishment:—

"I have thought well of what you write me, my dear Tolstoy, and it seems to me that you are wrong. In fact I cannot be

¹ This harmless little article, which originally appeared in the *Moscow Gazette*, when it was actually passed by the Censor, will be found in Turgueneff's "Souvenirs."

² Writing years afterwards to Flaubert, Turgueneff said: "You do not like walking, but you must force yourself to it. I once remained in prison for more than a month. The room was small, the heat stifling. Twice a day I carried 104 cards (two packs) one by one from one end of my cell to another. That was 208 turns=416 a day; one turn made eight steps, that is more than 3,300, nearly two kilometres! Let this ingenious calculation give you courage! On the day when I did not do my promenade I had a congested head."

quite just in regard to you, for I cannot be quite impartial. It seems to me that it was awkwardly, in an unhappy hour, that I made your acquaintance : when we meet again it will be more at our ease. I feel that I love the *man* in you (the writer—that goes without saying) ; but there are many things in you that ruffle me, and I have ended by thinking that it would be better for me to keep away from you. When we meet again we will try once more to go arm-in-arm. Perhaps it will be easier then. At a distance, odd as it may seem, my heart rests on you as on a brother. . . . In brief, I love you ; so much is beyond doubt. Perhaps what is to be desired may come about in time.”

And after laughing away Tolstoy's fears of a phthisical malady, he concludes :—

“You have finished the first part of ‘Boyhood.’ That is very good. How vexed I am not to be able to hear you read it ! . . . If you do not turn from the right road—and why should you?—you will go very far. . . . As for my ‘Faust,’ I do not think it can please you much. My works may please you ; it is possible even that they have had a certain influence on you so far as you have become *personal*. Now you have no longer any need to study me. You only see difference of style, characters which hang fire, omissions. . . . You need only study man, your own heart, and the really great writers. I am a writer of a transition time : I can only be useful to men who find themselves in a state of transition.”

But Tolstoy had good words for “Faust,” whose author replied from Paris :—

“Your sympathy has sincerely and profoundly delighted me. Beside, your letter altogether breathes something so pure and so calm, so friendly a peace. . . . It only remains for me to hold out a hand across the abyss which has long been changed into a scarcely perceptible crevasse, and of which we will speak no more because it is no longer worth mentioning.”

In the midsummer of 1858—the year preceding the appearance of “Family Happiness”—Turgueneff wrote thus to the Viardots:—

“ . . . I have passed three very pleasant days among my friends [at Yasnaya Polyana] : two brothers, and a sister, an excellent person who is very unhappy. She has been compelled to leave her husband, a very disgusting kind of rustic Henry VIII. ; she has three children, who are very well, especially since papa is there no longer. He treated them with systematic hardship ; he gave himself the pleasure of raising them in the Spartan manner, while himself leading a life of the opposite kind. These things often happen : people give themselves thus the pleasures of vice and of virtue—those of virtue by proxy. Of the two brothers, one is insipid enough ; the other is a charming lad, lazy, phlegmatic, talking little, and at the same time very good, very tender, and delicate in taste and sentiment, a truly original being. The third brother (Count L. Tolstoy, he of whom I have told you as *one of our best writers* ; that makes you smile and reminds you of Fêt, whom I shall see to-morrow, for he is my neighbour—but for Tolstoy : he is seriously an exceptional talent, as I hope to convince you some day soon by translating for you his ‘Childhood.’ I end here this interminable parenthesis). The third brother, I say, who ought to come has not done so. The sister is a good musician ; we have played Beethoven, Mozart, &c. . . . ”

It is a pity we cannot ignore what follows, for it shows Tolstoy in a very poor light. It is difficult to believe that such captious and priggish criticism as this can have proceeded from the pen that had written “The Cossacks” and “Family Happiness,” and was yet to produce “War and Peace” and “Anna Karenina” :—

"*February 23, 1860.*— . . . I have been reading, 'On the Eve.' Here is my opinion of it: generally speaking it is useless, especially for authors who are of a melancholy turn and do not know their own minds, to write novels. But still 'On the Eve' is far better than 'The Nest of Nobles'; and there are some excellent negative characters in it—the artist and the father. The others are not only not types, but not even the conception of them, and their situations are not typical—or they are completely vulgar; and, indeed, this is the perpetual mistake of Turgueneff. The girl is a perfect failure. . . . In fact the thing that always astonishes me in Turgueneff is that with all his cleverness and poetical instinct he cannot avoid the commonplace even in style. There is no humanity or compassion for the characters: they are painted monsters, which he abuses but does not pity. This contrasts painfully with the general tone and liberal tendency of the rest. . . . If you have no pity for your most insignificant characters you must either abuse them till the sky feels hot, or laugh to convulsions at them; and not treat them, as Turgueneff does, like one possessed by the demons of spleen and dyspepsia. . . . As to the lovers of antiquity, of whom I am one, no one prevents them from reading serious poetry and novels and seriously discussing them. Nowadays something else is wanted. We have not to acquire any more knowledge; we have to teach Marfurka and Taraska (*i.e.*, the peasants), at least to some extent, what we know ourselves."

After the death of Nicholas Tolstoy, for whom Turgueneff had a fraternal affection, Shenshin tried to bring about a full reconciliation of the two novelists, by contriving a meeting at his house. To the invitation Tolstoy responded that he "much wished to see Ivan Sergeyevitch, but twenty times more to see you." Turgueneff on the other hand, wrote anticipating an invasion of Fêt's house by the united forces, "while the nightingales still sing and the spring smiles serene and blissfully indifferent." The meeting duly came

off in May, 1861, and proved a disastrous failure. Shenshin thus describes what happened :—

“Turgueneff acknowledged that he alone was to blame in the dispute, and even his worst enemy could not accuse Tolstoy, the holder of the fourth bastion [presumably at Sevastopol] of cowardice. Tolstoy was so altered afterwards, and the meaning of the event so changed for him, that he was the first to stretch out the hand of peace.

“In the morning, at our usual time, nine o'clock, our guests came to the dining-room, where my wife sat by the samovar, and I, in expectation of coffee, sat at the other end of the table. Turgueneff sat on my wife's right hand and Tolstoy on the left. Knowing the importance Turgueneff at that time ascribed to the education of his daughter, my wife asked him whether he was satisfied with his English governess. Turgueneff began to sing her praises, and among other things said that the governess had asked him, with English exactitude, how much his daughter might spend in charity. ‘Now,’ said Turgueneff, ‘she wants my daughter to collect the ragged clothes of the poor and mend them.’

“‘And you consider that to be good?’ asked Tolstoy.

“‘Of course! it brings the charitable person closer to the poor,’ replied Turgueneff.

“‘And I think,’ said Tolstoy, ‘that a well-dressed girl who takes the dirty rags in her lap acts an insincere and theatrical part.’

“‘I request you not to say so!’ said Turgueneff, with quivering nostrils.

“‘Why should I not say what I am convinced of?’ answered Tolstoy.

“I had no time to interfere when Turgueneff said, pale with anger—

“‘Then I will force you to silence by an insult!’ With these words he rose from the table; then suddenly he clasped his hands excitedly over his face and left the room. After a moment he came back, and said, addressing my wife—

“‘I beseech you to forgive my rudeness; I am deeply sorry for it.’

"Then he withdrew. Understanding that the two late friends could no longer remain together, I ordered separate carriages for them."

Tolstoy then appears to have demanded an apology. Turgueneff replied as follows:—

"RESPECTED LEO NICOLAYEVITCH,—In answer to your letter I can only repeat what I thought it my duty to tell you at Fêt's : drawn on by the feeling of unwilling dislike, the cause of which it would be out of place to discuss, I offended you without any sufficient provocation on your part and apologised. What happened this morning proved that all attempts at intimacy between such dissimilar natures as ours can lead to no good. I pay my debt the more willingly as the present letter is in all probability the last shred of any relation between us. From the bottom of my soul I hope it may satisfy you, and I give my consent beforehand to any use you may make of it. With fullest respect, I have the honour to remain your humble servant,

" IVAN TURGUENEFF.

" Spaskoe, *May 27, 1861.*"

In sending this apology to their host Tolstoy indulged in the following comment:—

" I could not avoid opening one more letter from Ivan Turgueneff, replying to mine. I wish you luck in your future relations with that man ; but I despise him, and I wrote to him breaking off all relations with him unless he should send me a challenge. In spite of my apparent calmness I was much disturbed, and I felt I must request a more definite apology from him. Here is his letter, with which I am satisfied. I replied only that the reason which makes me pardon him is not the dissimilarity of our natures but another which he understands. Besides that, because of the delay, I sent him another letter, cruel enough, and containing a challenge, to which I got no answer. If I receive a reply I shall send it back unopened ;

so that is the end of this pitiful story, which, if it passes the threshold of your house, must pass it with this addition."

The fact as to the challenge seems to be that, Turgueneff's first note being delayed by a blunder of the messenger, Tolstoy took this as a refusal to apologise, and straightway wrote a challenge for a duel without witnesses early the following morning. This Turgueneff refused, but as an alternative to his apology offered to arrange a more formal encounter. The irate Count rejected this proposal in the most ungracious manner. Still the miserable episode was not finished. Four months later, while on his way to France, Turgueneff was informed that a defamatory letter against him was circulating in Moscow. "This," he wrote to Fêt—

"so enraged me that I sent him a challenge to take effect on my return to Russia. Tolstoy replied that the circulation of copies of his letter was a pure invention, and at the same time he sent me a letter in which, after having detailed once more the circumstance and the manner in which I had insulted him, he asks my pardon and declines the duel. Of course the matter must end there. I would only ask you to inform him (for he assures me that he will consider any further communication from me as an insult), that I myself take back every challenge, &c., and trust that the whole affair will be buried for ever."

In January, 1862, Turgueneff was writing in lighter mood. "The inference to be drawn from all this is that our constellations are positively at war with each other. . . . We two must live as if we inhabited different planets or lived in different centuries." And three months later, in a letter to Fêt, we have this

little sidelight : " Tolstoy has written to Botkin that he has lost money at play and has taken a thousand rubles from Katkoff in advance on his Caucasian novel. God grant that in this way at least he may return to his proper work." Whatever doubts Turgueneff may have had as to the line of Tolstoy's development, it can never be forgotten, and it is characteristic of his unfailing and even heroic generosity, that he constituted himself the other's spokesman, and in some cases his translator and business agent, in the French capital. It was on his initiative that at last, in 1878, the two great men settled all their differences, and the reconciliation was cemented in mutual visits, repeated on all Turgueneff's journeys to Russia. In 1879 he made himself responsible for a new translation of " The Cossacks," and corresponded with Flaubert about " War and Peace," describing its author as " the first contemporary Russian writer." In the same good service he wrote to Daudet, Zola, H. Taine, Ed. About, and André Theuriet, and contributed an article to the *XIX.^{me} Siècle*. In a letter to M. E. Halperine-Kaminsky, M. Chas. Edmond gives this instance of Turgueneff's efforts on behalf of his compatriot :—

" The newspaper, *Le Temps*, had already published some of his works, when, meeting him one day, I observed to him that our mutual friend, Hébrard, would be very glad to offer him once more the hospitality of *Le Temps*.

" ' Let us go on to my house, if you will,' replied Turgueneff, after a moment's reflection, ' and I promise Hébrard and you a surprise which will more than satisfy you.'

" It was the first time I had heard Ivan Sergejevitch speak in

so flattering a manner of his own merit. Arrived at his house, Turgueneff drew from his desk a roll of paper. I report him exactly—

“‘See,’ he said to me, ‘here is some copy for your paper. I am not the author of it ; the master—for he *is* a master—is nearly unknown in France, but I assure you on my soul and conscience that I do not feel myself worthy to unlace his shoes.

“Two days later appeared in *Le Temps* Leo Tolstoy’s ‘Memories of Sevastopol.’” (April, 1876.)

The very last tale of Turgueneff’s published in Russia—it appeared in Petersburg in 1885—a tender little recollection of childhood, “The Quail,” was done at Tolstoy’s request. And finally we have the following words written on his death-bed in Paris by the noble exile—surely one of the most pathetic farewells recorded in literary history :—

“MY VERY DEAR LEO NIKOLAYEVITCH,—It is long since I wrote to you, for I was, and I am, to speak frankly, on my death-bed. I cannot recover ; there is no hope of that. I write especially to tell you how happy I have been to be your contemporary, and to give you my last and urgent prayer. My friend, return to literature ! Reflect that that gift comes to you whence everything comes to us. Ah ! how happy I should be if I could think that my prayer would influence you. As for me I am finished. . . . My friend, great writer of our Russian land, hear my entreaty ! Let me know if you receive this bit of paper. Once more I embrace you, very, very heartily—you, your wife, and all of yours. . . I can say no more. I am weary.”

V

THE ANARCHIST AS HISTORIAN AND SCHOOLMASTER

BETWEEN his first foreign journey and his "conversion," twenty years of peaceful and comparatively normal life intervene. The shock of his brother's death, in the autumn of 1860, did indeed threaten an immediate crisis for his morbidly sensitive mind. It had been Death in his early home, Death through the Caucasus and Crimea, Death now again at his threshold, dogging his own foot-steps, as he may have thought in his then state of health—always and everywhere this grim spectre. The poignant note of the following letter is often heard in his afterlife and work:—

"On September 20th he died literally in my arms. . . Nothing in my life made such an impression on me. He used to say truly that there is nothing worse than death. But when you consider seriously that death is the end of everything, then life becomes an unmitigated evil. What profits it to strive and cry when of what was Nicholas Tolstoy nothing is left? He never said he felt the approach of death; but it seems to me he watched its every step, and knew for certain how much time was still left. A few minutes before his death he dozed, and

suddenly awaking, whispered with horror, 'What is it?' It was that he saw death, this falling of his being into nothingness; and if he found nothing to grasp, what shall I find? Less than nothing. And of course neither I nor any one else will struggle with death as he did. To the last moment he did not give himself up to death, did everything for himself, tried to be occupied, wrote, asked about my writings, and advised me; but all this, it seemed to me, he was doing not by an inner tendency, but on principle. Only one thing, nature, was left to the end. On the eve of his death, he went into his room and through weakness fell on his bed, near the window. When I came in he said, with tears in his eyes, 'How happy I was for a whole hour!' From earth he came—to earth he returns. . . . One thing only is left: a dim hope that somewhere in Nature, a part of which you will become in the earth, there will be something left and found. Every one who saw his last moments said how wonderfully quietly and calmly he died; but I know with what frightful tortures, for not a single feeling escaped me.' A thousand times I repeat to myself 'Let the dead bury their dead,' but I must spend the strength I still have on something. . . . You cannot laugh at a jest you are weary of; you cannot eat when you are not hungry. What is the use of everything? To-morrow will begin all the tortures of death, with the uncleanness of lies and self-deception, and will end in nothingness. . . . Strange! 'Be useful, be virtuous, be happy' people say; and you say 'The happiness, virtue, usefulness consist in truth.' And the truth I have gathered in thirty-two years is that the situation we are placed in is terrible. . . . As soon as the man reaches a certain point of development he will see clearly that everything is folly, deceit; and the truth, which he still loves more than anything, is frightful. When you see it distinctly you awake in terror and say, with my brother, 'What is it?' Of course, so long as you possess the desire of knowing and telling truth, you will know and tell it. This is all that is left to me out of my moral world. This only will I do. But not in the form of your Art. Art is a lie; and I can no longer love even a beautiful lie."

Fifteen years later, as the description of the death

of Levine's brother in "Anna Karenina" testifies, and even twenty-five years later — witness the harrowing realism of "The Death of Ivan Ilyitch" — this event was still clear and potent in his memory.

Three preoccupations saved the Count: marriage and family responsibilities; his farming, schooling, and magisterial work; and literature, especially the prolonged labours of "War and Peace" and "Anna Karenina," in which to tell the truth and scorn cheap romance was now not merely an instinct, as in "Sevastopol," but a realised duty. We may note, without accepting literally, the depreciatory references to these preoccupations in "My Confession":—

"On my return from abroad I settled in the country, and occupied myself with the organisation of schools for the peasantry. . . . Here again I acted in the name of progress, but this time I brought a spirit of critical inquiry to the system in which the progress rested. I said to myself that progress was often attempted in an irrational manner, and that it was necessary to leave a primitive people and the children of peasants perfectly free to choose the way of progress which they thought best. . . . It seems now absurd when I remember the expedients by which I carried out this whim of mine to teach, though I knew in my heart that I could teach nothing useful. After a year so spent I again went abroad for the purpose of finding out how I was to teach under these conditions. I believed that I had found a solution abroad, and armed with that conviction I returned to Russia the same year in which the peasants were freed from serfdom; and accepting the office of county magistrate or arbitrator, I began to teach the uneducated people in the schools and the educated classes in the journals which I published. . . . I might then perhaps have come to that state of absolute despair to which I was brought fifteen years later if it had not been for a new experience

in life which promised me safety—the home life of a family man. For a year I occupied myself with my duties as arbitrator, with the schools, and my journal, and got so involved that I was harassed to death ; my arbitration was one continual struggle. What to do in the schools became less and less clear, and my journalistic shuffling more and more repugnant to me, so that I fell ill more with a mental than physical sickness, gave up everything, and started for the steppes to breathe a fresher air, to drink koumiss, and live a mere animal life. Soon after my return I married, and the new circumstances diverted my mind from the search after the meaning of life as a whole. My life was concentrated in my family, my wife and children, and consequently in the care for increasing the means of supporting them. . . . In my writings I taught what for me was the only truth—that the object of life should be our own happiness and that of our family.”

It was in September, 1862, that the Count married Miss Behrs, the daughter of a military doctor stationed in Tula—he being then thirty-four and she only eighteen years of age. He is described as being at this time “a tall, wide-shouldered, thin-waisted man, with a moustache, but without a beard, with a serious, even a gloomy, expression of face, which, however, was softened by a gleam of kindliness whenever he smiled.” His wife, a beautiful and cultivated girl, had passed some examinations at the Moscow University. Her brother states that the manner of their courtship, even to the pre-nuptial confession, was identical with that of Levine and Kitty in “*Anna Karenina*.” The world owes much, very much, to Countess Tolstoy ; all that need be said here, and it is the least that could be said, is that the life of husband and wife and family at Yasnaya Polyana makes the best answer to the juvenile

effusion on "Love," in "Boyhood and Youth," and to hasty criticisms based upon "Family Happiness" and "The Kreutzer Sonata."

The great social revolution, as it then seemed to be, the Emancipation of the serfs, which was begun in the year before his marriage, gave the opportunity and the impetus which his nature had hungered for. Living steadily at Yasnaya Polyana winter and summer, with but the rarest visits to Moscow, he took up the threads of the ancestral life, burying himself in the hard details of farming, and the duties of a family which included his labourers as well as a large circle of blood relations. He became a Justice of the Peace, but was never much interested in the institutional side of the new *régime*. The aristocrat was still strong within him, and in the contact of classes it is often the extremes which meet most easily. In this case the meeting gradually grew into a close union. Sympathy with the *mujik*, a fraternal, not a patronising sympathy, had always been natural to him; the merchants, the machine-politicians, even the teachers, who sprang up out of the new middle class, were more intolerable than the *blasé* nobility of Petersburg. To meet the novel conditions of land-holding was a large and complicated task, to which he set himself with characteristic energy and shrewdness. He studied scientific agriculture, introduced new machinery, encouraged, with little success, experiments in peasant co-operation; all the time striving to increase his stock, crops, orchards, and timber. He was an enthusiastic sportsman. Mr. Behrs tells of a very narrow escape from a bear, whence he carries

still a scar upon his forehead; on another occasion he was thrown from horseback, when, having dislocated an arm, he reached home with difficulty. In condemning gymnastics, in these latter days, as an idle substitute for natural and useful work, he is speaking, as usual, from personal recollections. With children he was always gentle and playful. The later accounts of life at Yasnaya Polyana, no less than those of twenty years ago, speak of a perfect *camaraderie* which pointedly illustrates Tolstoy's absorbing interest in a high ideal of family relationships.

The pessimistic reference in the "Confession" to his experiments in pedagogic anarchism is evidently unjust to his own idea and effort, but the experiments cannot in themselves be called a success. He had opened his first classes, and had written articles on what he saw, especially in Germany, in 1858; in the meantime his ideas of education had changed somewhat. Moreover, the internal difficulties of the school were not the only ones it had to meet; indeed, its failure was foredoomed, if not because there is only one Tolstoy, then because success would not have suited the purposes of the arch-reactionaries, Count Dimitri Tolstoy, and later on M. Pobyedonostseff, and of the Russian Government generally. Thus in 1874 the Count's project for a college for peasant teachers was approved by the local *zemstvo*, but was cancelled by the authorities in Petersburg. Again, when in the winter of 1889-90 his daughter opened a school for children on the estate, the Governor of Tula, though

a personal friend, felt compelled to take notice of a complaint that the teaching was not orthodox, and to come down and suppress this little centre of enlightenment.

In his own home, however, this great spirit could not be chained. "If he did not carry out to their fullest extent the ideas advocated in (Rousseau's) 'Emile,'" says Mr. Behrs, "this was only because his wife was unable to act upon them in every case, and he himself was too occupied with literary labours. He counselled his wife to suckle her children, and not to entrust them to wet-nurses. In this she completely sympathised with him." (As to which, and the duties of motherhood generally, *vide* Natalia, Pierre's wife, in the last chapters of "War and Peace.") "The greatest possible liberty was allowed to the children, and all put in authority over them were strictly forbidden to have resort under any pretext to violent or severe punishments. Leo Nicholayevitch believed that these principles were nowhere so generally accepted as in England; and accordingly from their third to their ninth year the children were placed under the charge of young English governesses, engaged directly from London."

What is more important than these private advices and examples, however, is that Russia has the advantage of a series of admirable readers and spelling-books, and the world has the benefit of the most suggestive instances and precepts set forth in the account of "Yasnaya Polyana School"—a work which should be familiar to every educationalist, and especially to every parent—and the essays on "Progress and

Education," as well as a series of most charming stories and fables for children.¹

Of the few serious attempts to carry the ideas of Rousseau and Spencer into actual practice in the schoolroom, this must have been the ablest as well as the most naïve, for not only did Tolstoy throw himself into it with characteristic impetuosity, getting clever assistants down to the village, but he had himself unique qualifications for the task. The account of it will be a revelation to the average Englishman, with his eternal notion of law and order. Did Humour ever so crown and glorify Faith in a wild idea? The master is no more than a guide, and something of a victim also; the child's liberty is to be inviolable. As the teacher enters the classroom the lads are perhaps rolling in a heap on the floor. Slowly they come out of the heap and answer to his invitation to take their books. But one wants history, another poetry; one seizes the arm-chair, others sit on the table or the window-ledge.

¹ "The Long Exile" (Scott), made up from the fourth and twelfth volumes of the Russian collection, contains the story of that name, "What Men Live By," "The Repentant Sinner" (all three of later date), and the following of the period now under notice, "Yermak, the Conqueror of Siberia," "Bear-Hunting Worse than Slavery," "Stories of My Dogs," "Early Days," "Scenes from Common Life," "Stories from Physics" (the Magnet, Bad Air, and the like), "From Zoölogy," and "From Botany," "Fables paraphrased from the Indian, and Imitations," fables "From the New Speller," and "School Scenes at Yasnaya Polyana." There is a complete French translation of the latter. A critical summary of Tolstoy's views at this time will be found in Guyau's "Education and Heredity."

Gradually, however, the interest of the reading tames them. This method does not work very well in mathematics and geography hours ; its triumph is in singing and reading, and especially in story-telling, to which the evening is devoted :—

“Come into the school at dusk. There is no light in the windows—all is quiet. The snow on the stairs, a dull, low murmur, a movement behind the door, a young rascal, holding on to the bannisters, tearing up two steps at a time, are the only signs that the boys are within. Go into the room ; it is almost too dark to see, but look at that little fellow’s face : he is sitting down gazing intently at the master ; his brows are knit, and for the tenth time he pushes off his shoulder the arm of a schoolfellow who is leaning on him. Tickle his neck—he does not even smile, he merely shakes his head as though to dislodge a fly. He is absolutely absorbed in the mysterious and poetic story, at once entrancing and painful, of how the great veil of the Temple was rent in twain, and how darkness brooded over the land. . . .

“But now the teacher has finished. All rise from their seats and crowd around him, each repeating all he remembers of the story, and trying to out-shout his neighbours. . . .

“At last they calm down. Candles are brought, and their attention is diverted to something else. About eight o’clock their eyes grow heavy ; yawns are frequent ; the candles burn more dimly, and are not snuffed so often. The elders are still awake, but younger and duller lads begin to doze, with their elbows on the table, to the drowsy hum of the master’s voice.”

The master must neither reward nor punish ; he may bring a quiet, moral influence to bear, but that is the end of it. Freedom, spontaneity, are all-in-all for Tolstoy. Of course there can be no compulsion to attend school. The theory depends on the belief that children are naturally thinking beings, that they

want to learn, that free impressionability is the chief gate of learning, and that parents alone can properly exercise further disciplinary powers. To state these postulates is to indicate their answers, and their inapplicability to an immense and congested population like our own, where compulsory education has grown up primarily as a refuge against the exploitation of child-labour. But precisely because we have reached the other extreme does the individualism of infancy, as Tolstoy preached and practised it in the sixties and seventies, hold for us some invaluable lessons, suggestions, and warnings. A few fortunate people have also obtained a file of *Yasnaya Polyana*, a little journal published by the Count at his own expense, in which some of the matter already referred to originally appeared.

Still he made time to keep up his own studies. Besides agronomical and other technical works, he read philosophy, political economy, and some general literature in Russian, German, French, and English, making also the researches necessary for his great historical novel. In his forty-first year he began learning Greek, making, as with every other task, rapid progress. Mr. Behrs says that this enterprise produced in him a feeling of melancholy and despair which weakened his health, but he himself tells a different tale. In a letter to a friend in 1870 we have a pleasant picture of him setting aside other occupations in order to revel in Homer, Xenophon, and Plato. "How happy I am," he says, "that God sent me this foolish fancy! In the first place, I enjoy a pure pleasure; secondly, I have acquired the con-

viction that, of all the truly beautiful creations of the word of man, I was hitherto acquainted with none, like most people who know but do not understand. . . . As far as I can now judge, Homer is only spoiled by our translations, copied on German models. A vulgar but inevitable comparison suggests itself—that of boiled and distilled water, and cold, limpid water from a spring, with rays of sunshine playing in it, and even little particles, which make it seem but fresher and purer still. All these translators (Voos, Jukovsky, &c.) sing in a treacly, insinuating voice that comes only from the throat. But the real devil sings and shouts from his chest, and it never once enters his head that any one will listen to him. You may chaunt victory; but without the knowledge of the Greek tongue no education is possible”—which does not sound like the man who has lately been abusing the Greeks as an obscure tribe of primitive savages, mainly remarkable for confusion of thought and a low moral standard!

Perhaps this spasm of greed of learning had an injurious effect upon his health; for in the following summer he was advised to go to the Bashkir steppes for the koumiss cure. Here he spent a happy six weeks, living in tents, shooting, in daily contact with Russian *mujiks*, Ural Cossacks, Bashkirs, Khirgese; meeting also members of the Molokany, and understanding more and more the ways of unsophisticated people. In the succeeding winter he purchased an estate in Samara, where, then and since, he has learned and taught and played the elder brother in times of plenty and of famine.

Such were the outward landmarks of a life much of whose inner history is laid bare in the two books on which, apart from later developments, Tolstoy's fame securely rests. To these we must now turn. "War and Peace" was begun in 1860 and occupied the spare hours of the next five years. Its bulk will always tell against it with the average reader; its four volumes are further subdivided into fifteen parts and a two-part epilogue; and they cover, in the English edition, over fifteen hundred pages, thus extending to about six hundred thousand words, which is at least double the size of "Daniel Deronda." (According to Mr. Behrs, the Countess copied all this out from her husband's undecipherable notes no less than seven times!) At the end, for the reader's guidance, is given a list of nearly a hundred "principal characters," and he will find that many of these, especially the members of the Bolkonsky, Rostoff, and Bezukhoff families, are clearly realised and recognisable individuals, always speaking and acting, amid a constantly changing environment, with full semblance of life. The scenes are for the most part set in the camps and battlefields and the aristocratic homes of the Russia of Alexander I., the time stretching, with some intervals, from before the outbreak of war in 1805 to 1820. In the whole of this immense and crowded panorama there is nothing trivial or unmeaning, and there is ample matter for the satisfaction of various tastes, so that they be serious and above vulgar hunger after amusement. The disparities of personal character, family problems, the clash of vast political forces, have never been set

in contrast upon such a scale; for to name Balzac's "La Comédie Humaine" and Zola's "Rougon-Macquart" encyclopædia is to raise the most vital points of difference, both of spirit and method. In the succession of intensely vivid descriptive passages the general perspective is never lost. To attempt a continuous reading is to risk defeat by physical weariness; but taken as it should be, in reasonable instalments, the interest increases as the dimensions of the drama are seen to extend. We watch the routine of war through the eyes of all sorts of men—staff officers, common soldiers, peasants, diplomatists, the bereaved families at home—but always war as it is, in its inner necessary squalor and stupidity. Contrasted with this we see the hardly less squalid and stupid existence of "high society" in time of peace, in its barbarous palaces and clubs, and in the happier, more picturesque circumstances of country life and sport. We said "the drama," but Tolstoy is never stagey—very much the reverse. That was forbidden by his purpose, which was—and with what appalling success he achieved it!—to strip force of its glory, to rob the grand fighters of their ancient laurels, to vindicate the multitude of ordinary men, and to bring the storms and tidal movements of human history within the range of evolutionary science. Those, it must be remembered, were the days when science meant scepticism—not the *dilettante* agnosticism of to-day, but a hard, dry, materialistic temper—and when "evolution" was only the polite way of spelling revolution and red ruin. That Tolstoy was badly infected with the peculiarly bad Russian form

of this spirit of philosophic Anarchism, for which Russian political and social conditions were a most perfect training, and which ran to its ultimate lengths in the ebullient personality of Bakunin, is evident on many a page. But however much of the perverse, of the morbidly introspective, there was nothing of the brutal in Tolstoy. The contrast with Carlyle (whose "French Revolution" and "Hero Worship" of a quarter of a century earlier may be recalled in this connection) is complete, alike in style and substance. In the course of the narrative we have frequent glimpses of Napoleon, Alexander, Kutuzoff and the other generals on either side, all designed to belittle these reputedly great figures; but the result is accomplished by persuasion, suggestion, satire, instead of denunciation and caricature. The brutal and the fatuously sentimental, which together make up 90 per cent. of what passes for patriotism, are slowly disintegrated and disappear like base metal in *aqua fortis*. If there is much historical theorising in the latter part of the work, the real blood of life beats through it.

Huge as it is, "War and Peace" remains an unfinished work. Its natural sequel, if indeed this was not the main thing in his thought, and the other only a prologue, would have been the novel on the Decembrists which, although he attacked it twice at an interval of fifteen years, never got beyond the fragmentary state. The chapters which have been translated into French¹ are not very significant in

¹ "Les Décembristes. Fragments d'un Roman Projété."

themselves ; but there is a preface explaining that the author's interest in the circumstances of the preceding epoch, "the past of his heroes, the sources of those phenomena which he contemplated describing," detained him so that he did not get past the period of the Napoleonic wars. When he returned to the subject in 1878, the height of the "Nihilist" crisis, the time was quite too unpropitious. One cannot help feeling that Tolstoy was at that moment somewhat in the position of the returned exile of his story, who receives this sage advice from his ancient sister :—

"Hold yourself apart—I beg it in Christ's name—from all these Liberals of the present hour. God knows what they are plotting ! But all that will not end well. Our Government says nothing for the moment, but it is bound soon to show its claws. I fear lest you should compromise yourself afresh. Leave all that—it is only a bagatelle. You have children."

And this impression is strengthened by the following episode, narrated by Mr. Behrs, to which Tolstoy himself nowhere alludes :

"A number of family diaries and journals were placed at his disposal. In the winter of 1877 he went to St. Petersburg in order to go over the Petropavlovsk Fortress ; but he was not allowed to visit the Alexis dungeons, though it was exactly that portion of the fortress in which he was most interested. To obtain the necessary permission he had applied to the commandant under whom he served in the Crimean campaign.

Paris : Savine. The value of this version is enhanced by the addition of an historical introduction by M. E. Jaubert, in which the events of 1825 are admirably resumed.

He was received with the utmost politeness, but at the same time was informed that whilst any one could obtain entrance to these dungeons, only three persons in the whole empire having once entered could leave them, namely, the Emperor, the Commandant, and the Chief of the Gendarmes. This he told me when he had taken his place in the carriage in which I awaited his return from the Commandant. He also related to me several stories about the means of communication invented by prisoners confined in neighbouring cells, saying that it was the Decembrists who first worked out a regular alphabet of sounds, by which, after a little practice, the signification of taps on the wall was as easily comprehended as a printed book. It was with tears in his eyes that Leo Nicholayevitch also told me how a Decembrist, during his confinement in the fortress, once bribed a sentinel to buy an apple for him. The sentinel returned with a superb basket of fruit, and with the money the prisoner had given him to make the purchase. It appeared that the shopkeeper had sent it as a present directly he knew it was a Decembrist who wished to be his customer. He further cited the case of Lounine, a colonel in the Horse Guards, as a proof of the astonishing energy of spirit and sarcastic contempt with which these Decembrists endured their heavy punishment. In a letter to his sisters, written from the galleys, Lounine had referred sarcastically to the appointment of Count Kisselieff to a high post in one of the Ministries. The letter, of course, passed through the hands of the overseer, and its contents were made known at St. Petersburg. Lounine was condemned henceforth to work in chains. The overseer of the political convicts was thus able each evening to return home from the galleys smiling and content; and Lounine, chained in his dark underground cell, could also smile and despise him" (pp. 80-82).

So there is no reason to be surprised with the author's prefatory announcement that this novel "has certainly no chance of ever being finished." It is not the only child of that fertile brain which had to be abandoned "owing to the impossibility of treating his subject freely." On a book which was to have

dealt with Peter the Great the Count actually spent six months of research work ; as a result of which, according to Mr. Behrs, "he declared that his estimate of the personality and public acts of Peter was diametrically at variance with the prevailing opinion, and that he could find nothing in Peter or his doings that excited his interest or sympathy."

Of "War and Peace" Flaubert wrote : "It is of the first order. What a painter, and what a psychologist! The two first volumes are sublime, but the third drags frightfully. He repeats himself, and he philosophises. Finally we see the gentleman, the author, and the Russian, while till then one had only seen Nature and Humanity. It seems to me that there are some quite Shakespearean things in it. I shouted with admiration whilst reading. And it is long ! . . . Yes, it is strong, very strong." Well, criticism of Tolstoy written during the seventies has not much virtue to-day, even the best of it—and this is not the best. Russia for Flaubert was hardly more than a geographical expression—Frenchmen in those days would as soon have thought of looking to the moon as to the Muscovite colossus for salvation—political, moral, or artistic ; and Tolstoy was only a friend a very wild friend, of his Parisian friend, Ivan Turgueneff. Considering, however, that Mr. Ralston could write, as late as 1879, of "War and Peace" and "Anna Karenina" that "neither of these works seems likely to be translated into English," it ill-becomes us to throw stones. In later years Tolstoy has found no lack of French publishers—nor have Tolstoy's opponents either, for that matter : witness a

"study" of "War and Peace," "from the military point of view," by General Dragomirof, in the "Collection des Grands Écrivains Militaires." The "military point of view" may or may not interest soldiers; the chapters to which Flaubert objected are of consequence to all who would know Tolstoy, and especially to the historian and the student of the philosophy of history. Set in among the engrossing pages of the romance, they are certainly indigestible morsels; read seriously and consecutively, together with the two essays on "Napoleon and the Russian Campaign," and "Power and Liberty" (published under the title "The Physiology of War") they are full of force and suggestiveness, and the argument moves with such a wide and impetuous sweep that we are not sorry to have it repeated in other words. In attempting very briefly to indicate its direction, let us avoid conventional descriptions, such as "philosophic Nihilism," which mean many things to many minds, and never exactly fit the few, and so only darken counsel. Like the agnosticism and the anarchism which it reflects, it is as a criticism, not as a philosophy, that it has most value. That was always true of the earlier Tolstoy—perhaps it is true of the later also; and, indeed, the circumstances of the time, the place, and his own life suggest that it has been naturally and necessarily so. It would be difficult to imagine two fields which more clearly call for radical criticism, even in this somewhat later day, than that of governmental power on the one hand, and of the writing of history on the other; and that is the double theme of these pages. "Modern

History," says Tolstoy, "has abandoned the old theories without establishing any new views in place of them, and the logic of their position has compelled the very historians who have rejected the hypothesis of the Divine Right of Kings and the *Fatum* of the ancients to reach by a different route the same point : (1) that nations are guided by individuals ; and (2) that there is a special object towards which the nations and humanity are moving." In 1789 began in Paris a fermentation which resulted in a movement of peoples from West to East ; in 1812 this culminated at Moscow and ebbed back to Paris. " During this twenty years a tremendous number of fields remain unploughed, houses are burned, trade changes its direction, millions of men are ruined, are enriched, emigrate, and millions of Christians who profess to obey the law of love to their neighbours kill one another. *What is the cause of this ? What force moves the nations ?*" Most historians still reply : Napoleon, Alexander, Kutuzoff ; just as savages say the figure-head guides the ship, and the peasants say that a locomotive is driven by the devil ; others say that this force results from other forces, as the peasant says the locomotive goes because the wheels turn round ; and a third class credit the movement to intellectual forces, like the peasants who say the smoke issuing from the funnel moves the locomotive. To all which Tolstoy replies, in the first place, that "the life of nations cannot be summarised in the lives of a few men, for the bond connecting such persons with the nations has never been discovered." Incidentally he tears to tatters the pet theory of the

Muscovite monarchists, on which, indeed, in a modified form, all defences of personal rule depend, that "power is the accumulated will of the masses, transferred avowedly or tacitly to their rulers." With biting irony he knocks the grandeur and heroism out of war. Generals only seem to plan and achieve victory; actually, they are at the mercy of what appears to be accident; they are divided and distracted by jealousy, intrigues, and by their ignorance of what is going on. Napoleon, with his "ideal of glory and greatness built up in Italy and Egypt, with his wild adoration of self, his audacity in crime, his sincerity in falsehood," is but the puppet of a million "accidents." The same is true of the Russian tsar. No more is it to be supposed that Frenchmen butchered each other because Rousseau wrote the "Contrat Social." Moscow was abandoned not on a great deliberate military plan, but by an unconscious, spontaneous, popular movement, and was burned not by the patriotism of Russian officials or the savagery of the invader, but because an abandoned wooden city is sure to be burned when careless troops of soldiers come into it. "The movement of the nations is due not to power, nor to intellectual activity, nor even to a unity of the two, but to the activity of *all* the men who took part in the event, and who always group themselves together in such a way that those who take the greatest direct share in the event assume the least responsibility, and *vice versa*." All we can say as to this general activity is that it is due neither to accident nor genius, but to an inherent necessity of which we can know neither the origin nor the end.

“For History to regard the Free-will of men as a force able to exert influence upon historical events—that is, as not subject to law—is the same thing as for astronomy to recognise freedom in the movement of the heavenly forces.” “Free-will or History is only the expression of the unknown reserve of what we know about the laws of the life of man.”

This bare summary will raise many objections and prejudices, especially in the active, eminently individualistic Anglo-Saxon mind. The religious will be revolted by the theory on familiar grounds; the Socialist will reject it because, as Tolstoy admits in his final pages, it “not only does not subvert but it even strengthens the foundation on which are erected state and ecclesiastical institutions;” the Anarchist will forget his satisfaction over the destruction of the mighty in this denial of the independence of the individual. We do not argue the matter; we only claim in the first place that, even if we are left at the end with a question—What are the laws of the life of man?—even more puzzling than that with which we started, the critical process has been exhilarating and enlightening; and in the second place that this atomism, or fatalism, or whatever it may be called, though in Tolstoy himself it has been considerably modified, remains the chief constituent in the temperament of large portions of the human race, with whose destinies we are coming more and more closely into touch, and whose state of mind we should therefore endeavour to understand.

VI

THE HEART OF LEVINE

INDIVIDUALITY is never forgotten, in "War and Peace," in the effort to press an historical thesis ; and if there is much dust of broken idols one personality rises into clearer and clearer prominence. One feels that the writer must have split his own soul in twain to make those two chief figures of Prince André Bolkonsky and Count Pierre Bezukhoff—the proud and elegant gentleman, cold, sceptical, even as to the powers of reason, yet visited with spasms of spiritual anxiety, especially after the death of the wife whom he has despised ; and then the more typical Slav—gentle, emotional, weak of will, but full of humane desires. Every character is indeed, in a sense which can hardly be used of any other modern artist, the overflowing of some side of his own opulent and varied character. No quotations can give any idea of the multitudinous attraction of these volumes, but our main purpose requires us to indicate some scenes which evidently depict episodes in the Count's own development—this account of the sensations of the wounded Prince André, for instance :—

"It seemed to him as though one of the approaching soldiers struck him in the head with the full weight of a cudgel. It was rather painful, but his chief sensation was that of displeasure, because it distracted his attention and prevented him from seeing what he had been looking at.

"'What does this mean? Am I falling? Surely my legs are giving way,' he said to himself, and he fell on his back. He opened his eyes, hoping to see how the struggle between the artillerymen and the Frenchmen ended, and anxious to know whether or not the red-headed artilleryman was killed and the cannon saved or captured. But he could see nothing of it. Over him he could see nothing except the sky, the lofty sky; no longer clear but still immeasurably lofty, and with light grey clouds slowly wandering over it.

"'How still, calm, and solemn! How entirely different from when I was running!' said Prince André to himself. 'It was not so when we were all running and shouting and fighting. How is it that I never before saw this lofty sky? and how glad I am that I have learned to know it at last! Yes, all is empty, all is deception, except these infinite heavens. Nothing, nothing at all, beside! And even that is nothing but silence and peace! And thank God!'

* * *

"'Voilà, une belle mort!' said Napoleon, gazing at Bolkonsky. Prince André realised that this was said of him, and that it was spoken by Napoleon. But he heard these words as though they had been the buzzing of a fly. He knew that this was Napoleon, his hero; but at that moment Napoleon seemed to him merely a small, insignificant man in comparison with that lofty, infinite heaven with the clouds flying over it. It was a matter of utter indifference to him who stood looking down upon him or what was said about him at that moment.

* * *

"'It would be good,' thought Prince André, letting his eyes rest on the medallion which his sister had hung around his neck with so much feeling and reverence—'it would be good if everything were as clear and simple as it seems to the Princess Maria. How good it would be to know where to find help in this life

and what to expect after it! How happy and composed I should be if I could say now, "Lord have mercy on me"! But to whom could I say that? Is it force—impalpable, incomprehensible, which I cannot turn to or even express in words? is it the great All, or nothingness?' he asked himself, 'or is it God which is sewed in this amulet which my sister gave me? Nothing, nothing is certain, except the insignificance of all within my comprehension and the majesty of that which is incomprehensible but all-important.'"

If that were the last word of Tolstoy's nature, even at that period, we might be justified in adopting his self-delineation in the "Confession"; but emphatically it was not. Toward the end of the work there is a change, suggested rather than elaborated, in Prince André's mind, and this goes further in the person of Pierre, in whom the main interest of the final chapters is centred. He has sought "composure in thought and in philanthropy, in freemasonry" (a serious factor in Russian affairs during the early twenties: he describes it as "Christianity freed from political and religious dogmatic bonds—the doctrine of equality, fraternity, and love"), "in vinous oblivion, and in the transports of romantic love"—all in vain. Before the advancing enemy he too is a patriot, but with only half a heart. "I suppose," he interjects at a meeting of Muscovite nobles—"I suppose that the sovereign himself would have been sorry if he saw in us nothing but owners of peasants whom we should give him as meat for—as *chair à cannon*." For a moment, in the supreme crisis between the capture and the burning of Moscow, a new fever fills him: *he will kill Napoleon!*

"Either he must perish himself, or put an end to the misery which affected all Europe, and was caused, as Pierre reasoned, by Napoleon alone. . . .

"Two feelings of equal intensity irresistibly attracted Pierre to execute his project. The first was the feeling that sacrifice and suffering were demanded from him as a penalty for the consciousness of the general wretchedness. . . . The second was that vague, exclusively Russian scorn for all things conventional, artistic, human, for all that is counted by the majority of men to be the highest good in the world. It was in the Slobodsky Palace that Pierre had for the first time in his life experienced this strange and bewitching feeling, when he suddenly arrived at the consciousness that wealth and power and life—everything that men arrange and cherish with such passionate eagerness—even if it is worth anything, are of no consequence compared to the enjoyment which is the concomitant of their sacrifice. It is this feeling that impels the volunteer to drink up his last kopek, the drunkard to smash mirrors and glasses without any apparent cause, although he knows it will cost him his last coin to pay for them ; the feeling which impels a man committing (in the common acceptation of the word) crazy actions to put forth all his personal force and strength, thereby testifying to the existence of a higher justice outside of human conditions and ruling life."

Whether the two attempts upon the life of Alexander II. in 1866-67 suggested this imaginary episode as a contribution to the psychology of tyrannicide it is as impossible to say as to tell whether it was an accident or a radical difference of character which frustrated Pierre and only half frustrated Karakozoff and Berezowsky. Alas for his dire designs, it was only too easy for Pierre to forgive his enemies and to offer the other cheek to the smiter. A jolly French captain takes him by storm, and not from cowardice, but from sheer weak-

ness of will, the gunpowder runs out at the heels of his boots.

"Pistol and dagger and *kaftan* were ready. Napoleon was to make his *entrée* on the morrow. Pierre felt that it was right and profitable to kill the 'evil-doer,' but he felt that now he should not accomplish his purpose.

"Why? He knew not; but he had the presentiment that he would not carry out his intention. He struggled against this consciousness of his weakness, but vaguely felt that he would not get the mastery of it, that his former dark thoughts about vengeance, assassination, and self-sacrifice had scattered like dust at the first contact with his fellow-men."

Passing over the immediately following chapters, the most tender realism of the meeting of Natasha and the wounded André, and the scenes in Petersburg—"tranquil, sumptuous, engrossed only in phantoms and reflections of life . . . the same *levées* and balls, the same French theatricals, the same Court and official interests, the same intrigues"—we find Pierre a prisoner with the French, suspected of being concerned in the burning of the city, suffering the privations of captivity, and ever in immediate peril and horror of death. But it is just here that light breaks in upon him. The light-bearer is, of course, a common peasant, a fellow-prisoner. Tolstoy talks about himself as a "Nihilist" at this period, and dates his conversion to his meeting with Sutayeff fifteen years later. But Tolstoy had Sutayeff in his imagination and his heart long years before he met the village mason of that name; and here he is depicted in all substantial respects under the name of Plato Karatayeff. Plato is, no doubt, like all Tolstoy's

peasant-heroes, half a portrait from individual life and half a representation of the ideal *mujik* distilled out of centuries of Russian history in the heart of the greatest Russian artist.

"Afterwards Plato remained in Pierre's mind as a most powerful and precious recollection, the very embodiment of all that was good and worthy and truly Russian. His whole figure was rotund: his head was absolutely round; his back, chest, shoulders, even his arms—which he carried as though he were always ready to throw them about something—were round; his pleasant smile and his large, thick brows, and his gentle eyes were round. He must have been upwards of fifty. . . . There was not a trace of grey in beard or hair, and his whole frame had the appearance of agility, and especially of steadfastness and endurance.

"His face, in spite of a multitude of delicate round wrinkles, gave the impression of innocence and youth. His voice was agreeable in its melodious sing-song. But the chief peculiarity of his speech consisted in its spontaneity and shrewdness. He evidently never thought of what he said or what he was going to say. And from this arose the irresistible persuasiveness that was found in the rapidity and certainty of his accents. . . . The proverbs of which he made so much use were not the generally coarse slang which soldiers are apt to employ, but were genuine popular saws, which seemed perfectly insignificant when taken out of connection, but which suddenly acquired a meaning of deep wisdom when applied appositely.¹ He often said things that were diametrically opposed to what he had said before, but yet each statement would be correct. He loved to talk, and talked well, embellishing his discourse with

¹ The touching tale of the innocent exile which Plato tells by the camp fire ("War and Peace," vol. iv. pp. 166-168, Scott's edition) was used again by Tolstoy with some variation years afterwards, and will be found in the volume called after it, "The Long Exile."

affectionate diminutives and proverbs, which it seemed to Pierre the man himself improvised. But the chief charm of his narratives arose from the fact that the simplest events, those which Pierre himself had participated in without being any wiser, assumed a character of solemn beauty. . . .

"Special attachments, friendships, loves, as Pierre understood them, Karatayeff had none ; but he liked all men, and lived in a loving way with all with whom his life brought him in contact, and especially with men—not any particular men, but with such as were in sight.

"For Pierre he remained for ever what he had seemed to him the first night—the incomprehensible, rotund, eternal personification of the spirit of simplicity and truth. . . . Every word he spoke and everything that he did was the manifestation of that, to him, incomprehensible activity—his life. But his life, as he himself looked upon it, had no sense as a separate existence. It had sense only as it was a part of the great whole of which he was constantly conscious. His words and deeds flowed from him as regularly, unavoidably, and spontaneously as the fragrance exhales from a flower. He could not comprehend either the object or the significance of words or deeds taken out of their proper connection."

Under the influence of this, to us, singular and original creature, Pierre "no longer thought of Russia, or the war, or politics, or Napoleon. It was evident to him that all this concerned him not, that he was not called upon to and could not judge about all this." His indignation against his faithless wife, his own desires for pleasure, his idea of killing the great despot, seemed now either insignificant, incomprehensible, or ludicrous—inward peace and inward freedom made these outer things of no account. "Those very characteristics of his, which had been, if not injurious, at least a hindrance in that society where he had moved before—his

strength, his scorn for the amenities of life, his fits of abstraction, his simplicity—here among these soldiers gave him almost the position of a hero. And Pierre felt that this view imposed responsibilities upon him." Still desiring happiness, he saw, "not by his reason, but by his whole being"—a frequent and characteristic phrase of Tolstoy's—that "happiness was in himself, in the satisfaction of the simple needs of humanity, and that all unhappiness arises not from lack but from superfluity." During the hardships of the French retreat "he had learned that there is nothing terrible in the world. He had learned that suffering has its limits, and that freedom has its limits, and that these limits are very near together; that the man who suffered because one leaf on his bed of roses was crumpled suffered just as much as he now suffered sleeping on the cold, damp ground, one side roasting and the other freezing; that when he used to wear his dancing-pumps too tight he suffered just as much as he now suffered in going barefooted with his feet covered with sores."

On the night on which Karatayeff fell by a merciful bullet of his captors by the wayside, the night also of the rescue of the prisoners by a Cossack attack, Pierre had a curious dream. Some one seemed to be saying—

"'Life is everything. Life is God. Everything changes and is in a state of flux, and this movement is God. And as long as there is life there is enjoyment of the self-consciousness of the Divinity. To love life is to love God. More difficult and more blessed than all else is it to love this life in its sufferings, in undeserved sufferings.'

"'Karatayeff!' it occurred to Pierre.

"And suddenly there seemed to be standing before Pierre, as though alive, a dear little old man, long forgotten, who in Switzerland had taught Pierre geography.

"'Wait,' said the little man. And he showed Pierre a globe. This globe was a living, rolling ball, and had no natural divisions. The whole surface of the globe consisted of drops closely squeezed together. And these drops were all in motion, changing about, sometimes several coalescing into one, sometimes one breaking up into many. Each drop tried to expand, to occupy as much space as possible; but others striving for the same end crushed it, sometimes annihilated it, sometimes coalesced with it.

"'Such is life,' said the little old teacher.

"'How simple and how clear,' thought Pierre. 'Why is it I never knew this before?'

"'In the centre is God, and each drop tries to spread out, expand, so as to reflect Him in the largest possible proportions. And each expands and coalesces and is pressed down, and is to all outward appearance annihilated and sinks into the depths and comes out again.'

"'That was the case with Karatayeff! He overflowed, and vanished.'

"'Vous avez compris, mon enfant,' said the teacher.

"'Vous avez compris! Sacre nom! Do you understand? The devil take you!' cried a voice, and Pierre awoke. Squatting by the camp-fire sat a Frenchman, who had just been pushing away a Russian soldier and was now broiling a piece of meat stuck on a ramrod."

Now, amid the recovery of his country, Pierre grew into a happy, new life. "The very thing he had formerly tormented himself about and constantly sought in vain—an object in life—now no longer existed for him. He could have no object, because now he had a faith—not a faith in any rules or creed or dogmas, but in a living, everywhere perceptible

God. . . . He had a similar experience to that of the man who should find under his very feet the object of his search when he had been straining his eyes in looking to a great distance. All his life long he had been looking away over the heads of the surrounding people, while all the time there had been no need to strain his eyes, but merely to look straight ahead." Travelling with an Italian friend, even the snow-bound plains have a new meaning: he sees not "mere deadness," but "extraordinary vital fecundity—the power which upheld the life of this united, peculiar, and unique people." He is as though "fresh from a bath—a moral bath," as Natasha says.

Pierre and Natasha marry. Seven happy years pass: the "epilogue," chiefly a description of their family life, shows a further development in Pierre, which is not traced and is hardly realised, the novel tailing off in a philosophical disquisition. His heart is always in his country home, but by some unexplained set of circumstances he has become a leader in an important secret society. He even harangues his friends about it. "The state of things in Petersburg is like this: the sovereign takes no part in anything; he is wholly given over to mysticism." (It was in 1820, the time of Mdme. Krudener's influence over Alexander I., and five years, be it remembered, before the Decembrist revolt.) "All he asks is to be left in peace, and this peace can be given him only by the men *sans foi ni loi*. . . . Everything's going to pieces: robbery in the courts; the army under the rod; discipline, transportation, torturing the people, civilisation crushed. All the

young men and the honourable are persecuted. All see that this cannot go on so. The strain is too great, and there must be a break." His society, he protests, "is not only not hostile to the Government, but is composed of genuine Conservatives. It is a society of gentlemen in the full meaning of the word. We exist merely to prevent Pugacheff from coming to cut the throats of my children and yours and Arakchayeff from sending me to one of his military colonies." His wife asks whether Plato Karatayeff would approve. Pierre replies, after reflection, that he would not ; but he continues his train of thought, and it is evident that we are here on a different plane to that of the simple, docile peasant-soldier. It is disappointing to know nothing of the beginning or end of so significant a change.

In 1873, with renewed health and strength, Tolstoy began, and for three years was occupied upon, "*Anna Karenina*," on the whole perhaps the finest work in the range of fiction. The artistic qualities exhibited in "*War and Peace*" are here trained, matured, refined. It is like the change from a historical play at the Lyceum to an Ibsen drama. It is a case of intensive culture : the stage is small, and there are only a dozen persons of any importance in the story, which gains correspondingly in the vivid realisation of character in its heights and depths, its proportions and relationships; in the charm and terror of flaming womanhood, in the growing-pains of the masculine soul, amid the banalities of the city, or face to face with the nobility and purity of nature, and the simple virtues of a laborious peasantry. No need for his-

torical disquisitions ; always the interest is in real contemporary individuals, the war of sense with soul, with the family looming behind as the ark of the social covenant. The plot is a double one—the old, old tragedy of passion *versus* duty, of marriage without love, and love without marriage, in the persons of Anna and Vronsky on the one hand ; and the comedy of quiet matrimony achieved, after various slips, by Kitty and Levine, on the other. These two subjects move conjointly, as it were, in separate but partly coincident ellipses, so as by mutual refraction to raise that constant subtle suggestion which is so much more convincing than sermons, of the inevitability of ultimate disaster in the one case, and of steady, if somewhat cranky, moral progress in the other. Withal, what perfect justice is done to every contrasted type—even to Anna's wretched husband, a futile, little, self-conceited cog-wheel in the Governmental machine ; and to her shallow, selfish lover ! Kitty is a joy for ever ; but it is brilliant, generous, heart-hungry, desperate Anna who stirs our blood. And with what well-nigh supernatural blend of truth and tenderness is her tragedy told ! Matthew Arnold, in his not very acute or informing essay, written in 1887, and reprinted in "Essays in Criticism," complains of the introduction of irrelevant incidents, and observes : "we are not to take 'Anna Karenina' as a work of art ; we are to take it as a piece of life." To us it seems that there is nothing in the book irrelevant to the careers of Anna and Levine, which are really its two lines of interest ; and what could Arnold mean by

distinguishing between "a work of art" and a "piece of life"? Truly, the episode of the races, the splendid descriptions of Levine mowing with the peasants, of his marriage, of Kitty's confinement, of the death of Nicholas, are "pieces of life," and of Tolstoy's own life. But are not experience and memory the very eyes and hands of the imagination? In Tolstoy's case, if in no other, the antithesis of Life and Art is quite meaningless. The greatest scenes of all—Anna's first realisation of her shame, her meetings with the husband and child she has deserted, her last despair, the meeting of Karenina and Vronsky at what they suppose to be her death-bed—a climax which at first sight seems out of place in the middle of the book, but is really essential to the development of the three characters—could hardly have been witnessed and reported. Generally, however, the highest claim of Russian art is its power of producing "pieces of life"—of real life, that is—not pretty figures, conventional situations, or violent contrasts of character, or the artificial-comic, or the artificial-spectacular, or the artificial-sentimental; but shapes of thought and passion, more rarely of action, which have flashed upon a nature of extraordinary impressionability, have been held there by inexorable memory, and are now etched in with a spirit of apparently uncontrollable truthfulness. It is the art of the inner life. Therein it differs essentially from French realism. We may not be interested in the inner life—most Englishmen are not, most Russians are—but we cannot deny to the man who could draw Anna and Levine at the same time, and with equal

sincerity and affection, the name of artist. The limitations of the subject-matter of Russian art must always be borne in mind. The exquisite sensitiveness which gives us these wonderful psychologies is partly a result of racial traits, partly of the sudden awakening of a people out of barbarism and isolation into power and access to Western ideas, and partly of the introspection caused by long exclusion from free social and political activity, and the maintenance of a diseased environment. Often in "*Anna Karenina*" there is evidence of the maiming or maddening effect of the restriction of the sphere of public and private enterprise in Russian society. Anna's self-abandonment is a national trait, and the consequent views of marriage, divorce, and other social questions, like the emphasis upon the agricultural problem, must be regarded in the light of Russian conditions. But around every Russian trait plays the light of a cosmopolitan genius, and below each lies the bed-rock of our common human nature.

The story of Levine may be supplemented some day by letters, journals, and reminiscences; but it must remain, so far as this middle period of Tolstoy's life is concerned, the most important fragment of his autobiography, and the chief chart of his mental development. From the very outset we see his overwhelming interest in family relations and country life. To Levine, Kitty's first rash rejection of his suit is a thwarting not only of his taste but of the whole needs of his nature.

"Almost painfully he felt, as those around him felt, that it is not

good for man to live alone. . . . Time and labour, however, brought their balm ; the painful impressions little by little began to fade in presence of the events of the country life, important in reality in spite of their apparent insignificance. Beside his farm-labours and his ordinary reading, Levine undertook during the winter a study of rural economy, which he began with this premiss : that the labourer's temperament is a more important factor than climate or the nature of the soil ; agronomic science therefore must not neglect either of these three vital elements."

One day he visits his brother Nicholas, the scapegrace of the family, now living miserably in Moscow, in an advanced stage of consumption. He listens to the sick man's tirades against capitalism and landlordism, and his plans for the organisation of a trade union of locksmiths, but feels no responsive enthusiasm, his impressions seeming to be resolvable in this order of importance : (1) pity for his brother, with whom he feels a community of blood ; (2) repugnance at the squalid surroundings ; (3) a vague disquiet on the question of social justice. Back in the country, this disquiet fermented slowly.

"The conversation about communism which he had treated so lightly with his brother came back to him and made him reflect. A reform of economic conditions seemed to him doubtful, but he was none the less impressed by the unfair difference between the misery of the people and his own superfluity of blessings, and he promised himself that, though hitherto he had worked hard and lived economically, he would in future work still harder and live with even less luxury than ever."

Still he is the aristocrat—proud of his lineage and his independence—in love with the country and the

peasantry, but angry at the increasing poverty of the nobles and the increasing wealth of the merchant class. There is nothing romantic about his love of the country and the *mujiks*; it is partly instinctive, chiefly utilitarian.

"Their vices exasperated him as often as their virtues struck him. For him the people represented the principal partner in a labour association. He lived among them and he knew them thoroughly; he was their landlord, mediator, and adviser—for the *mujiks* had faith in him and came to him from forty versts around to ask his opinion."

No sooner is he challenged to take part in the working of governmental machinery than the Anarchist in the man leaps to the surface:

"The Emancipation was quite another affair. It was for personal interest. We wanted to shake off this yoke that hung upon the necks of all of us decent people. But to be a member of the town council; to discuss what only concerns smiths, and have to lay sewer-pipes in streets where one does not live; to be a juryman and sit in judgment on a *mujik* who has stolen a ham, to listen for six hours to all sorts of rubbish which the defendant and the prosecutor may utter, and as presiding officer to ask my old friend the half-idiotic Alyoshka, 'Do you plead guilty, *Mr.* Accused, of having stolen this ham? . . .'" I am interested in what concerns the fate of my children, my brother, myself. I am willing to discuss this because it touches me; but to deliberate on the employment of forty thousand roubles of district money, or to judge the crack-brained Alyoshka, I won't do it, and I can't . . . Indeed," he continued, again jumping to a matter entirely foreign to their subject, "our provincial institutions and all that remind me of the little twigs which on Trinity Day we stick into the ground to imitate a forest. The forest has grown of itself in Europe; but I cannot on my soul have any faith in the birch sprouts, or water them."

Then follows the description already mentioned of Levine's day at the scythe with his labourers (Part iii., chap. iii. iv. v.)—one of the crowning passages of modern literature. It was terribly hard work for the *barin* at first, and he thought he must fall out of line. Just in time there was a rest at the end of the first stretch ; then a refreshing shower fell.

"The work went on and on. Levine absolutely lost all idea of time, and did not know whether it was early or late. Though the sweat stood on his face and fell from his nose and all his back was wet as though he had been plunged in water, still he felt very well. His work now seemed to him full of pleasure. It was a state of unconsciousness ; he did not know what he was doing or how much. . . The moments of oblivion came back to him more and more frequently—the scythe seemed to move of itself . . . to have a self-conscious body full of life and carrying on, as it were by enchantment, a regular and systematic work. These were indeed joyful moments. . . .

"The sun was setting. The dew was already falling. The grass fell in high heaps ; the mowers came together as the rows converged, rattling their drinking-cups, sometimes striking their scythes together, working with joyful shouts, rallying each other. . . . It was hard to climb and descend the steep sides of the ravine. But the *starik* did not let this appear. He never ceased to joke with Levine and the *mujiks*. Levine behind him felt as though he would drop at every instant and that he would never be able to climb, scythe in hand, this steep hillside. But he persevered all the same, and succeeded. He felt as though some internal force sustained him."

"I am going to enrich medicine with a new term—the Labour Cure," he said, when he got home. "It is a sovereign specific against nervous troubles." On another day in the fields the idea takes root and begins to germinate.

"When the people had passed out of sight he was seized with a sense of his loneliness, of his physical indolence, of the hostility which existed between him and this life that he saw. All these *mujiks*, even those who had quarrelled with him about the hay, whom he had injured or who had cheated him, saluted him gaily as they passed and showed no anger for what he had done, or any remorse or even remembrance that they had tried to defraud him. All was swallowed up and forgotten in this sea of joyous universal labour. God gave the day, God gave the strength; and the day and the strength consecrated the labour and yielded their own reward. No one dreamed of asking, Why this work? and who enjoyed the fruits of it? These questions were secondary and of no account.

"Levine had often looked with interest at this life, had often been tempted to become one with the people, living their lives; but to-day the impression of what he had seen in the bearing of Vanka Parmenof towards his young wife gave him for the first time a clear and definite desire to exchange the burdensome, idle, artificial, selfish existence which he led for the laborious, simple, pure and delightful life of the peasantry. . . .

"Nothing could be heard but the nocturnal sounds of the frogs croaking in the marsh and the horses whinnying as they waited for the morning. Coming to himself Levine stood up on the hay-rick and, looking at the stars, saw that the night had gone.

"'But what am I going to do? How am I going to do it?'" he asked himself, trying to shape the thoughts and feelings that had occupied him during this short night. They had run in three separate directions. First, it seemed to him that he must renounce his former way of living, which was useful neither to himself nor to anybody else. In comparison to it the new life seemed to him simple and attractive. The second thought especially referred to the new life which he longed to lead. To renounce his useless intellectual culture was easy, especially when the simplicity and purity of his future life was so likely, as he thought, to restore him to calmness and quietude of mind. The third line of thought brought him to the question how he should effect the transition, and in this regard there was nothing clear that presented itself to his mind.

"'I must have a wife. I must engage in work, and not solitary

work. Shall I sell Pokrovsky? buy land? join the commune? marry a peasant woman? . . . One thing is certain: this night has settled my fate. . . How lovely!' he thought, as he gazed at the delicate, rosy clouds which floated overhead, looking like mother-of-pearl inside some shell. 'And when did that shell have time to form? I have been looking this long time at the sky, and only two white streaks were to be seen. Yes! thus, without my knowing it, my views about life have been changed.'

At this critical moment he meets Kitty again, and "horror seized him as he remembered his resolution of marrying a *Krestianka*." Still his mind is full of the idea of a new kind of life.

"Never had there been such failure and such unfriendly relations between him and his *mujiks* as this year: and now the reasons were quite clear to him. The pleasure which he found in work itself, the resulting acquaintance with the *mujiks*, and his envy of their life—all this had so changed his views as to the management of his estate that he could not take the same interest in it as before. . . . Now he clearly saw—and his study of books on rural economy, in which the principal element was found to be the labourer, may have helped him to this conclusion—that the existing method of managing his estate was only a cruel and wicked struggle between himself and his labourers, his high aspirations on the one side, on the other the natural order of things.

How to rectify this injustice becomes for him an absorbing question. He cannot understand how his friend Sviashsky, "a thoroughgoing Liberal," can interest himself in the partition of Poland, or attach any importance to his office of Marshal of the Province, or how he can suppose that schools, which mean the creation of new wants, can solve the economic problem. "How can a knowledge of addition and

subtraction and the catechism help the peasants to better themselves materially?" For himself, he would try Co-operation. Unfortunately the peasants could not or would not understand his idea. Neither Mill nor the French and German Socialists could throw any real light upon the special Russian problem.

He is again at the end of a blind alley, when a visit from his sick brother Nicholas throws all his thought back into a morbid personal channel.

"Death, the inevitable end of all, for the first time appeared to him with irresistible force. Death was here with this beloved brother who groaned in his sleep, and called now upon God, now upon the devil. It was with himself also. . . . He was lying in bed in the darkness, holding his knees, scarcely able to breathe, so great was the tension of his mind. The more he thought, the more clearly he saw that from his conception of life he had omitted nothing except this one little factor, death, which might come and end all, and that there was no help against it, none whatever. . . . All that he saw before him was death. But still he was just as much interested as ever in his projects of reform. It was necessary to keep his life occupied till death should come."

He carries out at last his long-planned foreign journey to investigate the social and especially the agricultural situation in Western countries. Soon after his return he marries Kitty and is launched upon the full tide of family happiness. For a time he is content, and makes good progress with his book on Russian rural economy.

"The poverty of the country, in his opinion, was not entirely caused by the unequal distribution of landed property and false economic tendencies, but rather by a premature introduction of

European civilisation. Railroads, constructed not by reason of actual necessity, but from political motives, produced an exaggerated centralisation in the cities; the development of luxury and consequently the creation of new industries at the expense of agriculture, an extraordinary extension of the credit system, and its concomitant stock speculation. It seemed to him that the normal increase of the wealth of the country could admit of these signs of exterior civilisation only when the cultivation of the land had been proportionately developed. . . . His theory was based upon the idea that the Russian people could not have the same relations to the soil as the other European nations; and to prove this he hastened to add that in his opinion the Russian people feel instinctively predestined to populate the immense uncultivated tracts stretching towards the East. . . . He saw that Metrof, like all the rest, looked upon the condition of the Russian people from the standpoints of capital, wages, and rent, though he was obliged to confess that for the eastern and by far the greater part of Russia, there was no such thing as rent; that for nine-tenths of Russia's eighty millions wages consisted of a bare subsistence, and that capital did not yet exist except as it was represented by tools that were primitive."

Whether these passages exactly represent Tolstoy's convictions at the moment when he wrote them; whether the figures of Nicholas, Mertof, and Sviazhsky were designed after contemporary Socialists and Liberals whom he knew, or not, they are certainly a product of the politics of the time—the early period of the active revolutionary movement, when hundreds of ardent youths were, as they put it, "going to the people" with the gospel at first of platonic Anarchism, then of militant Socialism, only to find a grave in the Petersburg fortress, or in some far Siberian convict settlement. Tolstoy could not but be touched and troubled by this awesome and unprecedented move-

ment, into which, indeed, for the hour, the choicest blood of the nation was directed. The strength of this outside influence is very evident through the concluding pages of "Anna Karenina"; if it had been any stronger and more evident the book would never have passed the Censor. Already he contemplates the abandonment of his worldly possessions.

"'You are right,' said Levine, 'in calling my five thousand rubles of income unjust. It troubles me.'

"'Give your land to this *mujik*; he would not refuse it,' replied Oblonsky. . . .

"'I don't give it, because I have no right to dispossess myself of it. I have a family, and I recognise duties towards it.'

"'If you look upon inequality of fortune as an injustice it is your duty to put an end to it.'

"'I strive toward that end by doing nothing to increase my fortune.'"

But clearly as he sees the gross injustice of the existing social relations, though they make his life a daily torture, the newly hatched panaceas of Paris and Berlin and Petersburg, the crude idealisms of the just-awakened Russian youth, are not for him. He too must "go to the people" whom already he knows so well—not to teach them a strange political creed, however, but to learn the secret of their good hope and immeasurable content. In some vital matters he is already far ahead of these brave young apostles. He had long outgrown mere nationalism. So unsparingly did he attack the Slavophil fever in which the whole of Petersburg and Moscow society was then sunk that Katkoff refused to include these closing passages in the serial publication of "Anna Karenina." Turks

also are human beings. He knew by old experience not only the horror but the uselessness of war, except to the military and trading classes who profit by it. His hatred of the appeal to force already brings him to the verge of his later pledge to non-resistance.

“ ‘Suppose you were walking in the street and saw a drunken man beating a woman or a child. I think you would not stop to ask whether war has been declared before you attacked the man and protected the object of his fury.’ ”

“ ‘No’ (Levine replies) ; ‘but I would not kill him.’ ”

“ ‘Yes, you might even kill him.’ ”

“ ‘I don’t know. If I saw such a sight I might yield to the immediate feeling. I cannot tell how it would be.’ ”

As to war in general he has no hesitation whatever.

“He could not admit that it was right for a handful of men, his brother among them, to claim to represent, with the newspapers, the will of the nation—especially when that will called for vengeance and butchery, and when their whole case rested on the doubtful stories of a few hundreds of miserable fellows in search of adventures. The people—and he felt that he was one of them, a representative of the great Russian people—would never regard war as a boon, whatever its object. If ‘public opinion’ were infallible, why were not the Revolution and the Commune as legitimate as the war for the assistance of the Slavs?”

For twenty-five years Tolstoy had known every important turn of critical thought ; and this also he had outgrown. Amid false conventions and cruel conditions of life, youth naturally develops the iconoclastic spirit ; but maturity none the less demands an abiding faith. Scepticism makes an ever-weaker appeal past

the meridian of the forty-fifth year. Take Science in the very culmination of achievement : and what are her Prix Bordin, and her professorship, and all her *fêtes*, to poor Sonya Kovalevsky, when the prize of prizes, heart-happiness, is denied her ?

“ Ever since that moment when, as he sat beside his dying brother, Levine had examined the problem of life and death in the light of the new convictions, as he called them, which from the age of twenty to thirty-four years had taken the place of his childhood's belief, he was terrified not only at death but at life ; because it seemed to him that he had not the slightest knowledge of its origin, its purpose, its reason, its nature. Our organism and its dissolution, the indestructibility of matter, the laws of the conservation and development of forces, were words which were substituted for the terms of his early faith. These words and the scientific theories connected with them were doubtless interesting from an intellectual point of view, but they stood for nothing in the face of real life. And Levine, like a man who in cold weather had exchanged his warm *shuba* for a muslin garment, felt, not with his reason but with his whole being, that he was absolutely naked and inevitably destined to perish miserably. From that time, without in the least changing his outward life, and though he did not like to confess it even to himself, Levine never ceased to feel a terror of his ignorance. More than all, he felt with shame that what he called his convictions not only proceeded from his ignorance, but failed to help him to a clearer knowledge of what he needed.

Marriage, with its joys and its new duties, completely blotted out these thoughts, but they came back to him with increasing persistence after his wife's confinement, when he lived in Moscow without any serious occupation. . . . He discovered that the best people he knew were believers . . . and that the materialists only threw aside the questions without an answer to which life seemed to him impossible, in order to take up others which to him were utterly uninteresting, such as the development of the organism, the mechanical explanation of the soul, and others. . . . After he reached the country, he became convinced of

the uselessness of seeking in materialism an answer to his doubts ; and he read the writings of those whose explanations of life were opposed to materialism : Plato and Spinoza, Kant and Schelling, Hegel and Schopenhauer. They satisfied his reason while he was reading them . . . but when practical life asserted its point of view this artistic structure fell like a house of cards."

In narrating this crisis Tolstoy returns unconsciously to an analogy he had used near the end of "War and Peace":—

"In the infinitude of time, of matter, of space, an organic cell is formed, exists for a moment, and bursts. That cell is—I.' This was a gloomy sophism. . . . He saw in it the cruel jest of some evil spirit. . . . And Levine, the happy father of a family, a man in perfect health, was sometimes so tempted to commit suicide that he hid ropes from sight lest he should hang himself, and feared to go out with his gun lest he should shoot himself."

However, Levine does not shoot himself ; on the contrary, so long as he pursues the old energetic, instinctive life he feels that he is useful and happy. And when, in the fields one day, an old *muji*k tells him of a certain "honest man" who "lives for the soul and remembers God," these simple, old-fashioned words have an extraordinary effect upon him—"the effect of an electric spark suddenly condensing the clouds of dim, incoherent thoughts," so that "he felt that some new impulse, inexplicable as yet, filled his heart with joy." So the volume ends in a spiritual ecstasy from which it would be unprofitable to quote further. Not that there is any mark of insincerity in these final pages ; no doubt they are

a true record of his feelings as he wrote them. But the enthusiasm and the eloquence seem to have no more definite nucleus than an infection from the unreasoning, instinctively unselfish and laborious life of the *mujiks*. That could not be as new an experience with Tolstoy as it is here made to seem ; and though the *dénouement* is interesting enough—for there is always some element of novelty in his frequent rediscoveries of his own ancient emotions—it is not the normal Tolstoy, who is, above all, concrete and convincing.

VII

"THE MEANING OF LIFE"

I SAT in an English court of law recently during the hearing of a charge against a Russian refugee of having issued in London certain pamphlets in the Russian language calculated to incite to the assassination of the Tsar. It was a curious spectacle, this anxious effort of the British Government to give a foreign autocrat an insurance of personal safety which he steadily refuses to give to his own subjects. I suppose there were not two Englishmen in court who could read the documents in their original form. No Russian witnesses were called on either side. The Judge, the Attorney-General, and the minor counsel wrestled in vain with the long Russian names, and did not even struggle to understand the historical circumstances recited in the indictment. Not the slightest attempt was made to realise and allow for the differences of character and political circumstance between the man at the bar, or his hypothetically incited compatriots, and the twelve "good and true" but desperately unimaginative and ignorant Englishmen who, with little hesitation, returned a

verdict against him. It was an object-lesson not easily to be forgotten in the absurdity of shallow, if well-intentioned, judgments upon far-removed conditions of life and thought.

If I am essaying a yet more complex task, at least the consciousness of its difficulty is something; and as many years of consideration have gone to its accomplishment as the Old Bailey judge and jury gave hours. Moreover, I am offering no set verdict; and if there is any blundering it is the reader and myself, and not Tolstoy, who will suffer. It is pretty certain, for the present, at any rate, that very few of the thousands interested in him will devote months to a systematic examination of his writings, and to getting the results into the focus necessary for the clear realisation of a steadily developed and self-consistent personality. The casual or superficial reader will never obtain this impression; he may be ever so much influenced by Tolstoy's critical or analytical thought, or by such pieces of his positive programme as may at the moment be most prominently before the public. But the very abundance, spontaneity, and suggestiveness of his ideas—the impetuosity and conviction of immediate urgency with which they are put forth red-hot from an unresting brain—make error easy, and that exact and comprehensive view, that complete synthesis, for which Tolstoy never seems to have time himself, immensely difficult. He is always original, always sincere, with the originality, the sincerity, the grandeur and charm of titanic childhood. Within the wide range of his interests he is immeasurably

fertile. In this book-ridden age it is an unspeakable blessing to get one quite unsophisticated view of ultimate questions—a view virtually impossible to any Englishman. This is the perpetual marvel of the man, that fifty years of busy authorship have left him quite natural, and, without vain conceit, quite himself. The forces that make tradition may be everything to him, but tradition itself is nothing; and his summary way with the older Olympian figures is often startling, sometimes almost amusing, to the scientific historian, as well as to the student bred to class-room submissiveness. The result is a not infrequent inaccuracy and injustice. Solomon, Plato, Goethe, Schopenhauer, go into this mental mill, and henceforth we see of them only some remnants required to typify what Tolstoy believes to be some special rightness or wrongness of principle, and to elicit and confirm his own ideas. Nor can he be any more just to his greater self than to these his peers. He is utterly unscientific, unsystematic; by consequence he is incapable of a full, finished, judicial self-expression. He is fragmentary, iridescent, volcanic; now emphatic on this aspect, now on that. It is only after careful study that the unity of the perturbed career of this prophet and critic who could never make himself a judge and legislator is discerned. I have given prominence to pertinent passages from "Childhood," "War and Peace," and "Anna Karenina," rather than to "My Confession," because I am endeavouring to vindicate the essential Tolstoy, who has been much the same from the beginning, against the eruptive Bunyan-like

protestations of his later period ; because the self-consciousness which adds so much attraction to all Confessions detracts in the same degree from their psychological value ; and, finally, because the reader will probably be disproportionately familiar with the later and shorter works.

Of course this procedure leaves untouched and unaccounted for the fact of a prolonged mental crisis lasting in its acute stages from 1876 to his meeting with the peasant-preacher Sutayeff in 1879, and in a milder measure for several years longer. "My Confession"—the body of which was written in 1879, a postscript being added three years later, after its publication in Russia had been forbidden—is the narrative of this crisis, and so an expansion of and a supplement to the final passages of "Anna Karenina"; and to it we must go for Tolstoy's own account of his "conversion." In 1874, he says, "a strange state of mind-torpor began to grow upon me." He was low-spirited, perplexed always with the same questions—"Why?" and "What afterwards?" Life seemed objectless, meaningless.

"Thus I, a healthy and happy man, was brought to feel that I could live no longer, that an irresistible force was dragging me down into the grave. The idea of suicide came as naturally to me as formerly that of bettering my life. It had so much attraction for me that I was compelled to practise a species of self-deception in order to avoid carrying it out too hastily. I was unwilling to act hastily only because I had determined first to clear away the confusion of my thoughts, and that once done I could always kill myself. I was happy, yet I hid away a cord to avoid being tempted to hang myself by it to one of the pegs between the cupboards of my study, and ceased carrying a gun

because it offered too easy a way of getting rid of life. . . . My mind was neither deranged nor weakened ; on the contrary, I enjoyed a mental and physical strength which I have seldom found in men of my class and pursuits ; I could keep up with a peasant in mowing, and could continue mental labour for ten hours at a stretch without any evil consequences. The mental state in which I then was seemed summed up thus : my life was a foolish and wicked joke played upon me by I knew not whom."

Fresh search, long and obstinately continued "in every branch of human knowledge," gave no relief. Science appeared only to deny that there was such a question as "Why should I live?" Philosophy "accepts the question, but does not answer it." The idea of universal evolution not only answered nothing, but it was in itself impossible. "To say everything in infinite space and time is developed, becomes more complex, is then differentiated and perfected, is to talk nonsense. Such words can have no meaning, for the infinite can know nothing of simple and complex, of past and future, of better and worse." "Development and perfection in infinity can have no object, no direction, and therefore can give no answer to my question." It struck him as singular that the branches of knowledge most closely touching the question of man's destiny are most obscure, show most contradictions and most poverty of thought. If Science gave no reply, Philosophy (in the persons of Solomon, Sakya Muni, Socrates, and Schopenhauer !) declared bodily life to be an evil, and the end of life the beginning of blessedness. This imagined echo of his own despair he took as showing that "the state to which I had come was not the result of any

mental disorder, but, on the contrary, of my thinking rightly, of my being in agreement with the conclusions of the most powerful human intellects." Looking round among men of his own class he found only four ways of escaping from the dilemma : (1) that of ignorance ; (2) the Epicurean—the enjoyment of material goods ; (3) "through strength and energy of character," "by destroying life when we have perceived that it is an evil and an absurdity"; (4) "through weakness—by continuing to drag on, though aware that nothing will come of it."

At length light began to dawn, not through reason, but through another faculty, which had indeed been an unrecognised guide throughout this pilgrim's progress—"something which I can only call an instinctive consciousness of life"—and especially as an impulse of disgust with the narrow, artificial existence of the cultured or propertied class, and attraction toward that of the common, unconsidered millions.

"Whether owing to my strange kind of instinctive affection for the labouring classes, which impelled me to understand them and to see that they are not so stupid as we think, or thanks to the sincerity of my conviction that I could know nothing beyond the advisability of hanging myself, I felt that if I wished to live and understand the meaning of life I must seek it, not amongst those who have lost their grasp on it and wish to kill themselves, but among the millions of the living and the dead who have made our life what it is, and on whom now rests the burden of our life and their own.

So I watched the life common to such simple, unlearned, and poor, and found . . . that throughout mankind there is a sense of the meaning of life which I had neglected and despised.

The knowledge based on reason, that of the learned and wise, denies a meaning in life ; and the great mass of all the rest of mankind have an unreasoning consciousness of life which gives a meaning to it. This unreasoning knowledge is the faith which I could not but reject. . . . It seemed that in order to understand the meaning of life I must abandon the guide without which there can be no meaning in anything—my reason itself.”

This looked like another blank wall. Still, there remained the fact that faith alone relates the finite and the infinite and gives sense to life, understanding that faith—

“is not only the apprehension of things unseen, is not only a revelation (that is only a definition of one of the signs of faith), is not the relation of man to God (faith must first be determined, and then God, and not faith through God), and is not, as it has so often been understood, acquiescence—faith is the knowledge of the meaning of man’s life through which man does not destroy himself, but lives. Faith is the force of life.”

Definitions which seem to leave the matter somewhat less definite than it was before! However, Tolstoy now found himself “ready to accept any faith that did not require a direct denial of reason.” Orthodoxy, the more sophisticated forms of Christianity, belief in a “redeemer,” he categorically rejects. Then he turns to “the poor, simple, and ignorant, the pilgrims, monks, sectaries, and peasants”; he finds among them “whole lives passed in heavy labour and unrepining content”; “these men of the people live, suffer, and draw near to death in quiet confidence, and oftenest with joy.”

"I began to grow attached to these men. The more I learned of their lives the more I liked them, and the easier I felt it so to live. I lived in this way during two years, and then there came a change which had long been preparing in me. The life of my own circle of rich and learned men not only became repulsive, but lost all meaning whatever. The life of the working classes, of those that create life, appeared to me in its true significance. I understood that this was life itself, and that the meaning given to this life was a true one, and I accepted it. . . . I understood that the truth had been hidden from me, not so much because I had erred in my reasoning, as because I had lived the life of a parasite. . . .

"What then should man do? He also must gain his living, like the animals, but with this difference, that he will perish if he attempt it alone; he must labour not for himself, but for all. When he does so I am firmly convinced he is happy and his life is a reasonable one."

Imperceptibly—"through many changes of conviction and mood; not once, not twice, but hundreds of times; now joy and excitement, now despair"—there was added to this apprehension of "real life" the apprehension of God—not the Trinity, or any other of those abstractions which only led back into the old chaos, but God as the very spirit of life:

"A voice seemed to cry within me, 'This is He without whom there is no life. To know God and to live are one. God is Life.' Live to seek God, and life will not be without Him. Stronger than ever rose up life within and around me, and the light that then shone never left me again. Thus I was saved from self-murder. I returned, as it were, to the past—to childhood and my youth. . . . I renounced the life of my class, and turned to the simple labouring people around me, and the meaning they give to life. This meaning may perhaps be expressed thus: We have all come on earth by the will of God

and God has so created man that each of us can ruin or save his soul. To save his soul he must live after God's Word ; to live after God's Word he must renounce all the pleasures of life, labour, be humble, endure, and be charitable to all men. This to the people is the meaning of the whole system of faith as it has come down to them."

For a time he tried to accept also the usual Russian accompaniments of this simple faith—the dogmas, sacraments, fasts, image-worship; he attended church services, prayed morning and evening, fasted, prepared for communion, always moved by the thought that all that men sincerely believe must be truth in some form or degree. Two-thirds of the service, he says, were incomprehensible to him; resurrection he "could neither imagine nor understand"; the sacrament of the Eucharist was "an utterly inconceivable mystery"; miracles he "tried not to think of in order not to deny." "Practical questions arose which required immediate decision"—probably in relation to his own children, but other points of troubled reflections which he names are the relations of Orthodoxy with other Churches, and its patronage of war and executions—"and the decisions of the Church contrary to the elementary principles of the faith by which I lived compelled me finally to abandon all communion with it." One day he "heard the discourse of an unlettered peasant-pilgrim," one of those "who knew nothing of the doctrines of the Church." This was an encouragement and a stimulus; but he had now to confess that there was false as well as true in the popular religion, and that in order to separate these an examination of

its sources was necessary. "I turned to the study of theology, from which I had once turned aside with contempt as useless." And with this reference forward to "My Religion" and "The Gospels Harmonised" the "Confession" ends.

Of course the merely personal interest of this episode is immense. In any less-perturbed period the bare rumours of such a transformation would have been the sensation of the time in Russia. Russians could not be quite as much astonished as Britons would be if Mr. Ruskin joined the Salvation Army; but that was not because Tolstoy was any less important a personage among them than Ruskin has been amongst us. No, the Russia or Russian of to-day cannot properly be compared with the England or Englishman of to-day. The nearest English parallel to Tolstoy is Bunyan. He also had been tortured even in youth by an abnormal sense of sin. He also had been a soldier; he also was one of Nature's artists and one of Society's rebels; he also "went to the people." I recall some of Macaulay's sentences about him:—

"His keen sensibility and his powerful imagination made his internal conflicts singularly terrible. He saw visions of distant mountain-tops on which the sun shone brightly, but from which he was separated by a waste of snow. He felt the devil behind him pulling his clothes. He feared that he was about to burst asunder like Judas. His mental agony disordered his health. One day he shook like a man in the palsy. On another day he felt a fire within his breast. It is difficult to understand how he survived sufferings so intense and so long continued. At length the clouds broke. From the depths of despair the penitent passed to a state of serene felicity. An

irresistible impulse now urged him to impart to others the blessing of which he was himself possessed. His native force of genius and his experimental knowledge of all the religious passions, from despair to ecstasy, amply supplied in him the want of learning. 'The Pilgrim's Progress' was scarcely known to the learned and polite, and had been, during more than a century, the delight of pious cottagers and artisans before it took its proper place as a classical work in libraries. At length critics condescended to inquire where the secret of so wide and so durable a popularity lay. Bunyan is, indeed, decidedly the first of allegorists, as Demosthenes is the first of orators, or Shakespeare the first of dramatists. No other allegorist has ever been able to touch the heart and to make abstractions objects of terror, of pity, and of love. . . . His influence among the common people was such that the Government would willingly have bestowed on him some municipal office. One of the last acts of his virtuous life was to decline an interview to which he was invited by an agent of the Government."

Macaulay's cursory biographic method—Lo! a Genius! How very interesting! Poor fellow! And now let us pass on!—will hardly serve in the present day. We want to know what Genius is, and why it turns in this direction and not in that; why, for instance, there should be so many points of likeness between the greatest Russian at the end of the nineteenth century—his temperament and his doctrine—and our Bunyan, George Fox, and Quakerism just before the English Revolution of 1688. The very terms of this last problem suggest a partial answer. For whatever else the term Genius may comprise, it will always be found especially to denote that nature which, uniting with an exceptional store of mental energy an exceptional sensitiveness

to environmental influences, becomes, when these influences reach a certain intensity, the centre of a dynamic reaction. Viewed truly, Genius is less, not more, volitioned, is more, not less, necessitated, than normal humanity—if, indeed, there can be any more or less in the relation of necessity and choice. Its activity may run into one or another channel according to opportunity and the gifts it commands; but it will always have the one objective: its provoking cause. It may fall short of its goal, it may just reach it—the rarest thing of all—or it may overleap it, in which case it gives rise in turn to another reaction. In any case it is inevitable; and Turgueneff might as well have wished Milton to change places with Newton, or Christ with Plato, as Tolstoy to return to what he called "literature." Tolstoy had an inner master and an outer enemy; without moral suicide he could not evade the combat. Turgueneff did exquisite justice to the Russian intellect and imagination. Tolstoy was doomed to the yet more splendid task of displaying and vindicating the heart and conscience of the Russian people. For the greater part of his life the native environment, against which both these minds rebelled, was for Turgueneff only a memory. Upon Tolstoy it played from first to last with full and immediate force. It is to the changes in this environment, the opportunities it offered, and the gifts to which it appealed that we must now for a moment refer.

In the bright dawn of the Emancipation the most extravagant hopes had been nurtured by intelligent

Russians. Of course a country which had hardly any classic literature or art outside the frozen confines of the Byzantine Church, and which had no tradition of personal and collective liberties, no sacred autonomies save that one wonderful institution the *Mir*, had an immense leeway to make up before it could hope to rank with the Western nations. But it seemed possible to reach the same point of development without going through all those tiresome Western stages—feudalism, mediæval romance, renaissance and reformation, burgherdom, industrialism. If political aristocracies might have sometimes helped Western peoples against their rulers, latterly they had been a terrible infliction. Democracy seemed to be bankrupt in its very birthplace—unhappy France. What was the use of the municipal tradition to the proletariat of the English factory towns? No, Russia would show the West a shorter and better way! And truly, if her Tsar had been a second, a wiser Peter, great in intelligence and courage, she might have done so. The popular confidence in Alexander II., a well-meaning but pitifully weak ruler, was soon and roughly shaken. The growing power of the autocracy, backed at every point by the Orthodox Church, more than counterbalanced the ebullition of feverish and necessarily unorganised Liberalism; the Tsar repented his great concession as soon as it was made; and the second Polish insurrection (1863), encouraged as it was by Liberals at home as well as abroad, set the Court and officialdom into a helter-skelter of reaction. Entrusted to alien and unsympathetic hands, the Liberation scheme

turned out to be something very different to the hoped-for peaceful revolution. Any reader who is specially interested in the agrarian problem will find it treated with statesmanlike breadth of knowledge by M. Anatole Leroy-Beaulieu in his "Empire of the Tsars and the Russians." Even to-day, as he shows, the Emancipation "has benefited only about half the peasants of the Empire." The second operation, the Redemption, is still proceeding; not till next century will its working be complete. The whole business has been a gigantic warning against spoiling a gift in the giving. Had not the authors of the reform scheme been disgraced as soon as it was accepted, economic and financial if not also political reconstruction might have been carried on coincidentally with it. Instead, the peasant's burden is often as heavy as the serf's was in spite of revisions of direct taxation and reduction of the redemption dues. He is consequently unable to improve his methods of farming; the soil is becoming exhausted; the cutting down of forests has worked widespread mischief; and bad crops and famine are already chronic. It is easy in these circumstances to attack the *Mir* and the system of communal land-holding. But if the peasant is to a great extent tied to the soil by this double chain of undivided property and collective taxation, if excessive subdivision of land means subdivision of capital, stock, and tools, and all the other weaknesses of petty culture, the *Mir* yet gives a direct spur to personal effort; it provides the only available refuge, by mutual aid and insurance, to the disinherited and hopeless; and where the soil is not

frequently reallocated the advantages of ownership are united with local government and joint responsibility. The particular parasites of the Russian village—the money-lender, the speculator, the spirit-dealer—would have their victims under any dispensation immediately possible. That common property in land has not crumbled away, and 'is not doing so, shows that the system has deep roots in native instinct and habit. The enemy of the Russian village is the Imperial Government, whose oppressive activity has steadily increased, through conscription machinery (since 1874) and an ever-growing swarm of tax-gatherers, police, and semi-military provincial governors. Between the burden of taxation and the failure of crops the condition of the peasantry has become so wretched that they fall an easy prey to the famines and epidemics which in recent years have devastated vast tracts of the country.

No brighter, even more tragic, has been the lot of the small *intelligenza* which sprang up in response to the new foreign influences and intellectual and commercial opportunities after the Crimean War. The widening demand for freedom was met by an even more peremptory refusal. Law staggered for a moment on infant legs, and then collapsed. The power and ramifications of the police were steadily extended. In the hands of Count Dimitri Tolstoy and M. Pobyedonostseff the Holy Synod became a very Inquisition, the terror of Jews and heretics of every degree and kind. The rudiments of a modern judicial procedure gave way to courts-martial and "administrative" punishments; the anomalies and

cruelties of the penal system have become a scandal throughout what Mr. Gladstone, that inveterate idealist, used to call the civilised world. The Zemstvos, or county councils, were reduced to complete impotence as soon as they showed any signs of enterprise in public affairs; the elective justices of the peace were replaced by police officers appointed by the Crown (*zemski natchalniki*). Commerce and industry were subjected to ludicrous restrictions. Education, already far in arrears, was harassed by constant arbitrary interference in the supposed interests of the State and its Church. The Censor excelled his ancient self. Something of the corruption prevalent among the official classes came to light during the Turkish War. The city labourers found themselves face to face with the beginnings of an unregulated factory system, and yet forbidden to engage in any protective organisation. No nook or cranny of public or private life where the weight of the mailed fist, the bitterness of degradation, were not felt. It is a period of disease and despair, continued to this day with but the slightest ameliorations—disease and despair visible alike in the sombre and harrowing pictures of Verestchagin, Hay, Repin, the satires of Schedrin, the pitiful poetry of Nekrassoff, the grim realism of Garshin, the conspiracies of Sophie Perovsky, Stephanovitch, or Stepniak, and the spiritual *malaise* of Leo Tolstoy.

The Russian people come near to divinity in the awful depth of their patience. But revolution was now inevitable, and it began to grow along two separate lines—the political movement, the extreme

form of which filled for the moment the whole public stage; and the quieter religious movement, the significance of which—it being hidden away for the most part in the heart of the agricultural south, and presenting few ordinary revolutionary features—has only recently been discovered by the outside world. It was only in its second stage that the political revolt became markedly social, peasantist, and apostolic. Scepticism is the constant and all but inevitable outcome of a *régime* like that of the Russo-Byzantine Autocracy. The early "Nihilist," as Turgueneff pictured him, was just the more courageous and aggressive sceptic, mainly anxious about freedom of intelligence and the rights of the individual. "A Nihilist," said Bazaroff's friend (in "Fathers and Sons") "is a man who submits to no authority, who accepts not a single principle upon faith merely, however high such a principle may stand in the eyes of men." Bazaroff himself inveighs against art, romantic and philosophical abstractions, as well as against aristocrats and officials; recommends Stoicism and Büchner's "Matter and Force"; and finally falls a victim to his beloved 'ologies, dying with the words, "I have sworn to revolt and I do revolt!" upon his lips, from typhus caught in making a *post-mortem* examination. But this, after all, is only a picture from the outside, by a not wholly sympathetic senior. It is to Tchernichevsky's romance, "What's to be Done?" written in prison in 1863, that one must go for an authentic account of the *état d'âme* of the student class, male and female, who called themselves "the new generation," and tried in their own persons

to lay down amid these unpromising conditions the bases of "the new life." It is one of the most extraordinary ebullitions of glorified egotism of which history tells ; but at least, in the emphasis upon social relations, upon personal honesty and goodness, and especially the needs of awakened womanhood, there is something much more human in it all than in the unattractive if pathetic figure of Bazaroff, the nineteenth-century Ishmael. Gradually speculative Radicalism became merged in a mildly Socialistic apostolate, a necessarily secret propaganda in favour of freedom of speech and publication, public justice, personal security, the abolition of "administrative" exile, and the calling of a national assembly. This is not the place to speak of the crusade among peasants and workmen in the early seventies which, as even M. Leroy-Beaulieu admits, exhibited "a power of logic as to intellect, a force of will as to character, a capacity for passion, fanaticism, persistence, and self-devotion, which have been to Europe a veritable revelation." Whatever the feelings of free Englishmen may be, it was inevitable that the Autocracy should use its full strength against this "sort of cult of which the god, deaf and unfeeling, is 'the people,'" this "sort of church, kept together by the bond of love to that misjudged deity, and whose law is hatred of its persecutors." Nor, from the point of view of Orthodoxy, was it any recommendation that these youthful missionaries "apparently proposed to imitate the first apostles of Christianity" ; the reward afore determined for this type of "perfect morality" and "immaculate virtue" is the pestilential

prison or exile in the wilds of Northern Asia. Thousands of men and women were arrested and punished, often without even the semblance of trial. This swift and terrible revenge produced a still more extreme reaction. The terrorist arose, and from 1878 to the culminating point, the assassination of Alexander II. in 1881, all Russian society was in chaos, the great towns being commonly in a state of siege: a whole generation of intelligent youth swept away: masses of ignorant sectarians confident that at last the end of the world was at hand. The unequal struggle could not long continue. After some still-born military plots and agrarian risings, the revolutionary parties fell back upon a policy of propaganda and preparation. The reign of Alexander III. was a period of unmitigated reaction; and the present Tsar has neither the strength nor the intelligence to make a new departure. During the last few years the beginnings of a new dynamic movement have been witnessed, a less startling but more promising agitation, in that it comes not out of the small educated class but from the rapidly growing ranks of the town labourers. If, after all, Russia cannot escape the industrial stage of development, neither can she escape the concomitants without which industrialism could not have developed in the West—freedom of organisation and agitation; and, once these are gained, the rest of social liberty must speedily follow.

If any one can consider it a mere accident that Leo Tolstoy should have been creating André Bolkonsky and Pierre Bezukhoff at the time when Tchernichevsky

was peopling his cell with the figures of Kirsanoff, Lopukhoff, Rakhmetoff, and their girl-friends: that Levine's labours should have been paralleled in real life by the radical propaganda among the peasants; and that Tolstoy's mental turmoil and "conversion" was exactly coincident with the climax of the revolutionary struggle—if this were conceivable, then it would have been waste of time to review these environmental circumstances. But it is not; and nothing could be more absurd than to regard as free and separate from his fellows a member of a community where individual freedom is unknown. That is not the way by which we can reach the truth about Tolstoy. In his "Confession" the Count unconsciously repeats the error of the historians whom he indicted in "War and Peace." He isolates and exaggerates an episode which, genuine and natural as it undoubtedly was, still was only a link in a chain of unusually consistent development; and he does this with such force and sincerity that the rapid reader will either accept the narrative just as it stands, or will turn away as from a marvellous story for which no adequate explanation is offered, and which arouses no echo in his own experience. More numerous than those who either accept or reject Tolstoy's later evangelicism will be the readers who will simply take so much as suits their own taste, nature, and environment; and it need hardly be said that few or none of these will be able to bring to the task either the genius or the devotion which Tolstoy has shown in his picking and choosing among the Christian creeds and scriptures. I am hopeful that some Englishmen

may think it worth while neither to blindly accept nor blindly to reject nor blindly to pick and choose, but to seek to understand this man who, more than any man of our time, is the microcosm of a people. Who knows the high mountains best—the aeronaut, or the climber who starts from the valley and, laboriously tracing out the ravages of wind and rain, frost and heat, penetrates the cloud-line and at length looks down into the yet simmering crater and up into the universal blue? You cannot cut the top off the work of any man of genius, and say, This is of universal validity; the rest may be disregarded. The fire of life runs from the roots upward; and from beginning to end it is the one universal. Russian life is diseased from one end to the other, but not Russian life alone. Every great Russian is destined to be a rebel; but in the West also, where “wealth accumulates and men decay,” the spirit of rebellion is more and more needed as institutions and conventions and the struggle for life become more oppressive. The rebellion on Western methods has so far failed; that, however, hardly touches the resources of the Russian people. A rebellion of the British or French sort would have failed in Jerusalem eighteen hundred years ago; yet have not the Conquest and the Crucifixion been amply avenged? Stundism, Molokanism, and the other forms of rational religion which are absorbing all the energies of Dissent, may not at present seem very alarming developments, but they have this primary strength and promise: they are spontaneous, indigenous growths clearly suited to the bent of the common people. When I think of

the better features of these popular faiths, I almost cease to wonder at the vastness of Tolstoy's expectations. Used always to progress line upon line, it is startling to find amid these steppes a pure spiritual religion worthy to be set beside that of our own Quakers and Unitarians, and capable of a self-sacrifice which we sophisticated folk can hardly understand. Even within the Orthodox fold, though there is plenty of attachment to rite and ceremony, there is no clericalism, in the sense of the word which obtains in the Roman and even in the Protestant Churches. The very ceremonies and credal mysteries find a powerful rival in the realistic and naturalistic influences ruling in these plains and forests, and a powerful solvent in the qualities in which the people are so wonderfully rich—pitifulness, humility, brotherliness, unselfishness—all that we sum up in the word "charity," all that gives Russia the name of a New Testament country. The vitality of the Raskol, the schismatic sects, is astonishing. No movement of this size and vigour could have grown up had it not been stimulated by more real grievances than those to which the official historians chiefly testify, and sustained on more nutritious food than fossil formalism and tradition. Nikon's revision of the liturgical books may well have excited some animosity among a people always averse to over-definition and over-elaboration of dogma ; but it was the beginnings of an alien dictatorship, the vexatious interference with native institutions, rights, and manners, in order to build up an autocratic State on a basis of serfdom and compulsory military service,

which, if not actually the first cause of the schism, certainly brought it, through all rigors, to its present strong maturity. In the most orthodox of the dissenting sects, those which have some sort of a priesthood, this phase of social revolt is not prominent, except in the belief that the Tsar is Anti-Christ and in the stubborn resistance they have offered to repressive measures. The non-clerical half of the old Dissent—which while holding to the old faith has abandoned the sacraments, except baptism, and has no organised priesthood—has developed more rapidly toward rationalism in religion and radicalism in social affairs. It has both money and business ability at its command, and in that and other respects reminds us of our Methodism and Quakerism. Apart from the old Dissent, there have grown up in more recent years a number of new sects representing a still more vigorous protest, not only against the existing social order but against Eastern Orthodoxy as a whole. Two of the elder of these—the Dukhobortsy (those who carry on a Spiritual Strife) and the Molokany—and one younger, the Stundists, have become well known abroad. All these are rationalists, anti-ritualists, interpreting Christianity in a purely spiritual sense, condemning *icons* as idols; holding their simple service, consisting of the Lord's Prayer, Scripture-reading, and psalm-singing, in their homes when allowed or, when forbidden, in barns or even out on the open prairie. The Dukhobortsy have been barbarously persecuted during the last few years; a report upon some of their communities in the Caucasus which had been the object of special attention

at the hands of police and Cossacks, written by a special commissioner sent for the purpose by Count Tolstoy, will be remembered.¹ Their doctrine, a sort of mystical Unitarianism, is none too warmly described by M. Leroy-Beaulieu as "one of the boldest efforts of untutored popular thought." The much more numerous Molokani are Bible Christians who also hold to the freedom and responsibility of the individual conscience. Both bodies refuse military service, and sometimes refuse even to pay taxes. They often break out into experiments in religious communism—a characteristic phenomenon in Russian life, one favoured both by natural and social conditions. The Stundists, though but a generation old, and though subjected, in the latter half of that period especially, to many pains and penalties, have numbered something like half a million persons in that part of Southern Russia to which they are practically limited. Like other religious truth-seekers nearer home, they are distinguished among their fellows by their thrift, temperance, industry, and education. Fines, imprisonment, outlawry, exile, the break-up of their homes, the abduction of their children, have played havoc in the ranks of the new Dissent during the last decade, but have not served to crush it. No religion was ever killed thus ; and it will

¹ The *Times* of October 23, 1895. See also "The Religious Persecutions in Russia," a pamphlet issued by the Society of Friends of Russian Freedom ; Mr. Stadling's "In the Land of Tolstoy" ; and "The Stundists : the Story of a Great Religious Revolt." London : J. Clarke & Co.

be as true in Russia as elsewhere of old that the blood of the martyrs is the seed of a better dispensation.

It will now be less difficult to see why this artist and teacher "took religion" in so acute a form in his fiftieth year. It was not alone the common disillusionment of the present generation with physical science, the revulsion from the heated enthusiasms of the mid-century. It was not alone hunger for something more solid than the verbiage of the philosophical schools. It was not alone the discovery of the hollowness of the Charity Organisation ideal of the younger Levine, the poor man's patron. It could hardly be in any very immediate sense, except as to the possession of wealth, a conviction of sin. It was not alone the incapacity for political action. But all these elements had long been in conspiracy together in his nature; and now, in this crisis of his country's history, in the midst of civil strife, and on the eve of war, the demand for some personal contribution when the cry for help resounded on every side must have lain heavily upon his spirit. And as the impetus came partly from within and partly from the social circumstances of the time, so also it was partly his own needs and gifts, and partly an infection from the very remarkable religious movement among the peasants, that determined the direction of the new development. In face of what we have seen of his mental past we must hold that it was new only in its intensity, in the demand that the ideas that had inspired his art should be put to the harder test of life. In the introduction to "My Religion" (dated January, 1884) he still insisted upon the cataclysmic view of the matter:

"My whole life underwent a sudden transformation. What had once appeared to me right now became wrong, and the wrong of the past now became right. My life and my desires were completely changed." It is only in these accounts of his first steps in the new path that we have in Tolstoy's pages a sense of exaggeration, a lack of lucidity. Afterwards, when he has lost himself in the rediscovery of the ever-fertile Christian ethic, he becomes again clear, forcible, persuasive as of old.

VIII

THE FIVE COMMANDMENTS

HARDLY was the "Confession" finished ere the Count had planned three new works—a further narrative of spiritual experience, a criticism of dogmatic theology, and a new translation, comparison, and "harmonisation" of the Gospels. In these three directions he went feverishly to work, anxious lest his final term should come before his message was fully delivered. There is no wonder that these books show in fact a lack of the ripe and rounded judiciality dear to the Anglo-Saxon mind, when we recall that the three lines of thought were being pursued at once; that, thanks to the ban of the Censor, and the, as yet, indifference of the outside world, the manuscripts were subject to constant irregular accretions as new ideas sprang into the author's mind; and that at the same time new plays and stories were being put upon his literary stocks. "The Four Gospels Harmonised"—only published in England in 1895, although it had circulated in manuscript in Russia ever since the Censor forbade its publication some fifteen years before—need not here delay us. Its chief importance

is the concrete and startling evidence it gives us of Tolstoy's ingrained rationalism, which triumphed even in the climax of the spiritual hurly-burly and the moment of mystical exaltation through which he had just passed. For once we feel that the most interesting things are those he leaves unsaid. There is a silence which gives the impression of a logical lapse.¹

¹ A certain ambiguity prevents me from regarding as an explanation the following passage, which I quote from the preface to "The Spirit of Christ's Teaching" (a portion of the third part of the larger work, published before it): "Concerning all deviations from the version accepted by the Churches, the reader must understand that the generally accepted notion as to the Gospels being to the veriest letter sacred is not only a most profound error, but also a most gross and harmful deception. He must also remember that Christ himself wrote no book, as did philosophers like Plato or Marcus Aurelius; nor did he, like Socrates, transmit his teaching to learned or even to educated men, but spoke for the most part to an unlettered crowd, and that only long after his death was his teaching and life described. . . . Nor does it follow, if the teaching of Christ were inspired, that a certain number of verses and letters in recording it should become so. . . . The actual number of different renderings for Gospel passages is estimated at fifty thousand. The reader must admit that it is not only unblame-worthy to omit from them unnecessary passages, but that it is most unreasonable to be withheld from doing so by the sentiment that considers sacred an appointed number of verses and syllables. On the other hand, I would not have it understood that because I do not consider the Gospels to be sacred books, directly descended from heaven, that therefore I regard them as mere monuments in the history of religious literature. I am conscious of both their theological and historical bearing, but I desire to contemplate neither; what I see in Christianity is not an exclusively divine revelation, nor a mere historical phenomenon, but a teaching which gives the meaning of

Without any argument about the matter, Jesus is presumed to be a man, and not more than a man ; the Bible to be a human book, or rather library, and nothing more. The Old Testament goes for little, Jewish theism being but one of many foreign faiths ; the Acts of the Apostles, the Epistles, and the Book of Revelation are dismissed as generally unedifying, and sometimes pernicious. Even from the Gospels Tolstoy takes only what seems good to him, rejecting the miraculous, resolving the contradictory by some rough-and-ready process, ignoring the abstruse. And at the same time, also without any appeal to the usual arguments, a quite exceptional authority is yielded to Jesus and the words attributed to him. This inconsistency—for the heretic playing literalist is at least inconsistent—considerably weakens the extremer details of Tolstoy's ethical argument. It is only one of many inconsistencies in the relations of a modern prophet with classes so far apart in time, space, and experience as the simple *mujik* and the complex Parisian or Londoner. It is more satisfactory to note the contrast between the references to reason, science, philosophy in "My Confession," and his thorough re-endorsement of rationalism afterwards. "Attempts in our day to instil spiritual

life." Possibly the concluding sentence of the same paper suggests, in its pathetic allusion to the fate of heretics in contemporary Russia, the reason why this train of thought was not more thoroughly followed out : "There are two alternatives : the rejection of falsehoods, or the persecution of those who correct them, for which, while ending my writings I prepare myself with joy, and with fear for my weakness."

subjects into man by faith while ignoring his reason," he said in "Life," "are precisely the same as attempts to feed a man and ignore his mouth." And, in a later essay on reason and religion,—

"An opinion has obtained amongst men, who, I will boldly say, are bereft of true religious feelings, that reason is unequal to the solution of religious questions, that the application of reason to such questions is the most fruitful source of error, and that the solution of such questions by the aid of reason is sinful pride. . . . Man has been given by God one single instrument to attain knowledge of self and of one's relation to the universe : there is no other, and that one is reason. . . . It is said, Accept the truth by revelation, by faith ; but a man cannot believe independently of reason. If a man believes this and not that, it is only because his reason tells him that this is credible and that is not. Every man is endowed with reason, and to the reason of every man is disclosed the law which he must follow. This law is concealed only from those who do not wish to follow it, and who, in order to avoid it, cast reason aside, and, instead of using it to become acquainted with truth, accept upon trust the assertions of those who, like them, have surrendered reason. Yet the law which men should follow is so plain that it is accessible to every child, the more so as no man has to discover anew the law of his life. . . . Everything uncorroborated by reason must be set aside. Hence my answer to the question whether one should try to attain complete consciousness in one's inner spiritual life is that this is precisely the most needful and important business of our lives. Most needful and important, because the only reasonable conception of life is the accomplishment of the will of Him who sent us into the world—that is, the will of God.

The truth is that Tolstoy's fundamentals are neither Non-Resistance, nor Labour, nor Humility, neither an Oriental nor an Occidental rule of conduct ; they are two principles of universal validity, which cover the

whole field of human experience—Reason and Love. It is his tremendous faith in the power of these which nerves him to propose so startling an application. His reasonings may be full of error, but, except for momentary disturbances, he is always true to Reason. And Love, not pleasure, or utility, or any other proximate or merely logical test, is always the keystone of his ethic. So, too, Faith is for him no refuge from thought or action, but the highest reach of those ancient instinctive vital currents that hold the goodness of the race and carry it on from age to age.

“Truth is love in a common life,” said Sutayeff, the peasant-preacher. “Faith is the force and reason the lamp of life,” says Tolstoy, the artist-prophet. Always in the heart of these Russians lives the same anxious devotion to the daily routine of the forgotten millions. Not the supreme achievements of genius in art or science or statesmanship, not a widespread comfort or a widespread learning, but the prevalence of love in the common life : that is their final test of social health, their criterion of blessedness. This is their great message to the age.

By far the larger part of his later writing is concerned with the ethical side of his religious development. In “Life,” written in 1887 and published in England two years later, he returns to its philosophic aspects. The men who bother themselves about the origin of life when they ought to be concerned with its aim he likens to a miller who, concluding that all the success or failure of his mill depends on the river, allows the machinery to go to pieces, and, notwithstanding the

counsel of his neighbours, at last persuades himself that the river *is* the mill. Again he recalls one of Gogol's characters, who anxiously calculated how much powder would be required to break an elephant's egg—if elephants laid eggs! The materialistic deduction of life from the play of physical forces he scoffs at, as not even an opinion or a paradox, but rather a jest or a riddle. He cannot regard life otherwise than as a striving from evil toward good. The jargon of science is a sort of wrongheaded Volapük, in which impossible ideas receive impossible names. The world of science is an apothecary's shop where labels are pasted on the bottles not according to their contents but to suit the whims of the apothecary. "To define life according to the conditions of space and time is precisely the same as to define the height of an object by its length and breadth." "If we gaze very long and earnestly upon an object from one side we shall see the object from all sides, and even from its interior.' Amazing as is so strange a doctrine—explicable only by the fanaticism of superstition—it does exist, and like every whimsical, fanatical doctrine it produces its destructive effect, directing the activity of human thought in a false and frivolous path." Men are industrious and hasty enough in pushing on, but they have forgotten whither they are going. We must know our higher rational selves first, and the animal or lifeless matter in us and in the outside world after. Happiness is only to be attained by the submission of the animal personalities to the law of reason. Individual bliss, the constant object of man's search, is unattainable ;

only "another aspiration, after a happiness indestructible by suffering and death, imparts a reasonable sense to existence." The existence of an animal personality in time and space is not human life, which consists alone in the upward striving of the rational consciousness, and this is love. Love in the full sense is possible only to those who understand the meaning of their life, and only when it is the sacrifice of self. The fear of death is really only the fear of false life. Beneath the flesh and bodily consciousness which die is a fundamental *ego* on which successive consciousnesses are strung as beads upon a cord. The *I* which loves this thing and does not love that, the peculiar and fundamental *ego* whose choices are exhibited in what we call character, comes with us into this life from some unknown past and goes forward beyond the annihilation of the body. So, for the man who lives according to the law of his higher being there is no more death and suffering.

The thread dropped at the end of the "Confession" is taken up three years later in "My Religion," which opens with a further account of the author's revolt against the Orthodox Church, its dogmas and ceremonies, judgments and penalties, above all its persecutions and support of war and capital punishment, generally its indifference to essential Christianity. Harking back to the Gospels themselves, particularly to the Sermon on the Mount, which "always had for me an exceptional importance," he was at first disappointed. "The Divine words were not clear. They exhorted to a renunciation so absolute as to entirely stifle life as I understood it. To renounce everything,

therefore, could not, it seemed to me, be essential to salvation." But presently, "as I read these maxims I was permeated with the joyous assurance that I might that very hour begin to practise them," even down to the hardest, "the key that opened all the rest"—the command: "I say unto you that ye resist not evil!" He found the essence of the teaching of Jesus to be resolvable into "a series of very definite commandments," five in number, all having the "one object, the establishment of peace among men":—

"1. To offend no one, and by no act to excite evil in others, for out of evil comes evil.

"2. To be in all things chaste, and not to quit the wife whom we have taken.

"3. Never to take an oath, because we can promise nothing; for man is altogether in the hands of the Father, and oaths are imposed for wicked ends.

"4. Not to resist evil, to bear with offences, and to do yet more than is demanded of us; neither to judge nor to go to law, for every man is himself full of faults and cannot teach. By seeking revenge, men only teach others to do the same.

"5. To make no distinction between our own countrymen and foreigners, for all men are the children of one Father."

The first and fourth of these are virtually the same. On the other hand Tolstoy had no sooner put forth his short moral code than he was reminded, as we shall see, by another peasant-preacher, that he had omitted a commandment which is as important as the others—the law of what he calls bread-work—so that we may still speak of his five imperatives.

It is upon the four leading points here raised, namely, Non-Resistance, Chastity, Labour, and Inter-

nationalism, that almost all the recent attacks upon Tolstoy have been made, and to these we must now give further attention. Throughout it should be remembered that he nowhere attempts to hide behind the figure of Christ—for him, as he explicitly says, “faith in Jesus is not belief in a system based upon his personality, but a consciousness of truth—or to appeal to any other authority than the conscience which he believes to be potentially the strongest part of all men. There is therefore no need to consider whether in fact Christ intended his precepts to be taken either as literally or as universally applicable. Tolstoy’s case does indeed lay a very heavy burden upon every man who pretends to accept the words of the New Testament in their literal sense, and especially those who live by the maintenance of orthodox institutions.¹ Matthew Arnold objected to his method mainly upon the ground that Christ was an

¹ He has spoken out with characteristic force on this point as well against English as Russian ecclesiastics. In the *Forum* of October, 1888, Archdeacon Farrar printed a criticism of “My Religion.” In reply the Count describes his critic as being “like many learned theologians, a great master of the art of circuitously evading a question,” substituting creed for practice, supernatural authority for natural reason, and evasion for exposition. In the *New Review* (1894) there were replies to this outburst from several Protestant, Roman Catholic, and Nonconformist clergymen, including the Bishop of Ripon, who fell back on Peter, Paul, and Augustine, and accused Tolstoy of falling into “the snare of literalism of interpretation, that fatal and prolific parent of error.” But there is literalism and literalism. Tolstoy is certainly very unscientific in his exegesis, but he only accepts what he believes in, and having accepted it he acts accordingly.

opportunist who "paid tribute to the Government and dined with the publicans," the greatest apostle of "sweet reasonableness," whose teaching "cannot be packed into any set of commandments"—a proposition which, if it were really accepted, much as it might strengthen essential Christianity, would dispose of most of the Christian Churches as effectively as the opposite thesis of the Russian prophet of Christian Anarchism.

So far is the idea of Non-Resistance from the English mind that I shall urge rather its strength than its weakness. And, in the first place, it is absurd to suppose that world-figures like those of Tolstoy and his greater Master can be answered by cheap denunciations of "quietism," "fatalism," "mysticism," "pessimism," and "stagnation." These formulæ are far wide of the mark. Tolstoy is far from being in the ordinary sense a quietest, a mystic, and he is the reverse of a pessimist. Nor is he, as M. de Vogüé would have us believe, a Buddhist, a new preacher of "the cult of *Yogi*." Possibly we shall find some day that he has anticipated in many important respects that reconciliation of the Eastern and Western spirits which lies hidden in the bosom of the future. But he never forgets the worth of the individual life; he desires not asceticism but a return to Nature and reason; it is Western not Eastern conditions which trouble him. "I saw that Jesus did not exhort us to turn the other cheek that we might endure suffering, but that the exhortation was, 'Resist not evil!' and he afterwards declared suffering to be a possible consequence of the practice of this maxim." He has no

sympathy whatever with inaction, and his own life is a sufficient refutation of the notion that he could countenance sloth. He is aggressively practical. "I understand Christ's doctrine" (I again quote from "My Religion") "not as a vague and distant ideal, not as a collection of fantastic and poetical reveries with which to charm the simple inhabitants on the shores of Galilee. To me his doctrine was a doctrine of action, of acts which should become the salvation of mankind. This he showed in his manner of applying it. The Crucified One who cried in agony of spirit and died for his teaching was not a dreamer: he was a man of action."¹

¹ The real quietists, fatalists, pessimists, he would probably say, are those who do not possess his own faith in human nature, or are content with a lower ideal. Thus, in a paper on "Religion and Morality," in the *Contemporary* (1894), he waxes sarcastic over Professor Huxley (whom he describes as "shock-headed and entangled"!) because—"in the English society of our time, with its Irish destitution, its insane luxury of the rich, its trade in opium and spirits, its executions, its sanguinary wars, its extermination of entire nations for the sake of commerce and policy, its secret vice and hypocrisy"—he is content to hold that "a man who does not overstep police regulations is a moral man, and guided by an ethical process." Similarly in "Work While ye have the Light: a story of the Early Christians" (*Fortnightly Review*, October–November, 1890), we have some effective satire upon those who see that they are squandering themselves in a selfish existence, but always excuse themselves when a new departure is proposed: "'How extraordinary!' cried one of the guests. (He had uttered no word during the entire discussion.) 'How incomprehensible! We are all agreed that we should live in accordance with God's law, and that we actually are living badly, sinfully, and are suffering in body and in soul in consequence; and yet no sooner is it a

It is not the imitation of the ostrich that Tolstoy advises, then, but an active policy. He would carry over into the reservoirs of moral influence all the strength which is now spent in coercion or preparation for coercion, violent resistance or preparation for violent resistance. The first thing that must strike us is that this is an experiment which, in its literal fulness, has never been tried in human history. But human history gives abundant evidence of the fact that moral and physical influence, whether in individual or collective relationships, tend to grow in inverse ratio, and that both grow cumulatively. Most men would admit the considerable efficiency of spiritual power as between individuals ; and in that connection let us say that the common test-question put to Tolstoy—Would you not forcibly interfere with a murderer if you caught him in the act?—represents so infrequent a contingency as to be of little more than dialectical value, even if it permitted only of one answer. In individual relationships moral influence has ever

question of putting our conclusions in practice than we discover that children should be exempted—they, forsooth, are not to be disciplined in the new life, but educated on the old lines. Then it is wrong for young men to go against the will of their parents, and so instead of embracing the new ideas, they too should content themselves with the old. Married men, again, have no right to discipline their wives and children and inure them to the new way of living ; and so they too should live the sinful life of the past. As for old men, it is too late for them to begin ; they are not accustomed to the hardships of the new life—and besides they have only two or three days left to live. It appears, therefore, that no one should lead a good, upright, spiritual life—the utmost people may do is to discourse about it.’”

larger, and physical power ever smaller, sway. Tolstoy wishes to "speed-up" the process, and he proposes to accomplish this great end not by the magic of a single precept, or even a single example, but by resetting the whole individual life on a basis of health and goodwill. Who knows but that the hypnotism of the good personality would not bring back the age of miracles to earth? The question as regards collective relationships is somewhat more difficult. Here Tolstoy naturally judges by what is nearest to him; and the disparity between human authority as he sees it, and divine authority as he apprehends it within, is so great that no compromise seems to him possible. The second chapter of "My Religion" concludes with this charming story, which has often been parodied and adapted since:—

"One day I was walking in Moscow towards the Borovitsky Gate, where was stationed an old, lame beggar with a dirty cloth wrapped about his head. I took out my purse to bestow an alms; but at the same moment I saw a young soldier emerging from the Kremlin at a rapid pace, head well up, red of face, wearing the State insignia of military dignity. The beggar, on perceiving the soldier, arose in fear and ran with all his might towards the Alexander Garden. The soldier, after a vain attempt to come up with the fugitive, stopped, shouting forth an imprecation upon the poor wretch who had established himself under the gateway contrary to regulations. I waited for the soldier. When he approached me, I asked him if he knew how to read.

"'Yes: why do you ask?'

"'Have you read the New Testament?'

"'Yes.'

"'And do you remember the words, "If thine enemy hunger, feed him?"'

"I repeated the passage. He remembered it and heard me to the end. I saw that he was uneasy. Two passers-by stopped and listened. The soldier seemed to be troubled that he should be condemned for doing his duty in driving persons away from a place where they had been forbidden to linger. He thought himself at fault and sought for an excuse. Suddenly his eyes brightened ; he looked at me over his shoulder, as if he were about to move away.

"And the military regulation, do you know anything about that ?" he demanded.

"No," I said.

"In that case you have nothing to say to me," he retorted, with a triumphant wag of the head, and pulling his overcoat about him he marched away to his post. He was the only man I ever met who had solved with an inflexible logic the question which eternally confronted me in social relations."

The Count had forgotten again his so recent discovery that "inflexible logic" does not explain the mysteries of life, or furnish an infallible guide to conduct! The more important thing for us to remember is the large element of truth in this indictment. It is of no use flattering ourselves that we English are not as those wretched Slavs. We have not conscription, as yet, it is true: is it then morally preferable to keep a hireling class of fighting-men, now numbering, with those who supply them, well over a million of the Queen's subjects? It needs no Peace societies to tell us that the state of Europe to-day is a ghastly travesty of Peace, that barrack-life is a hell, and that militarism is gradually undermining the economic, intellectual, and moral life of the West. It needs not that we look to unhappy Greece for a reminder that war serves no one but the arch-despots who have parcelled out Europe

between them. It needs no contrast of Jubilation in London and famine in India to exhibit the hypocrisy even of our own most cherished institutions; no Panama scandal or Liberator crash to reveal the hollowness of our commerce and finance; no Dreyfus case or "Ballad of Reading Gaol" to display the cruelty and sometimes the baseness of our vaunted Law. It is the characteristic dilemma of this turgid day that not only every believer in institutions and government, but every moral and sensitive man, must be a rebel.

In all his indictment of modern civilisation Tolstoy must command general agreement, and it is immeasurably important that these things should be said. When we come to the precise way by which the moral health of large aggregates of men is to be recovered, we are on more debatable ground. Here it must be allowed that the ideal of a healthy social state will vary in different latitudes, according to racial characteristics and historical and economic circumstances, and that the means of reaching the ideal state will similarly vary under the influence of those capacities and influences. On both those points sane men will beware of "inflexible logic"; will recollect the differences of condition between race and race, man and man; and, with open mind, will give themselves to all works of reason and love. The rigid moral anarchism and moral agnosticism which are set forth in "The Kingdom of God is Within You" they will reject in the name of love and reason and the nature of things. It is no doubt true that "there is no *infallible* rule for distinguishing the good from the evil," and so that human judgments

are necessarily imperfect and perilous. Are we, then, to abandon reason, which Tolstoy has himself described as man's only lamp ; or are we not rather to trust our implicit consciousness that, with all its errors, there will be a balance on the side of truth and justice? To think otherwise would be to cut at the root of Tolstoy's as well as every other moral code. It is, in fact, just the absence of a uniform infallible moral standard in human nature which has made it necessary for contact and co-operation in society that the ablest minds should from time to time be set to discover the greatest common ethical measure upon which the majority of men will agree. So, too, the other main proposition—that no "Christian" can under any circumstances use force or submit to any Government — is, so far at least as democracy obtains in the world, a simple contradiction of two of the most important results of that life-test which Tolstoy advocates. The first of these is that love, and direction, regulation, restraint, compulsion are quite consistent, are natural allies up to a certain point. What that point is it is the business of politics and ethics to make clear. It is well to protest against war, persecution, capital punishment, and other barbarities of civil authority: to include all government in the same decree is to return to the kind of "whim" (as he himself called it afterwards) which the Count practised for a time in the Yasnaya Polyana school-room. The second fact is that an isolated human unit is impossible; that in human co-operation the element of compulsion, though it may be minimised and moralised, can never be wholly excluded; and

that no individual can strip himself of responsibility for what is done by the community whose past is in his blood and whose life he shares.

It is one thing for Tolstoy, who has not lived under any Government but the Russian Autocracy, to refuse to countenance a Government which daily outrages his heart and conscience, but quite another thing for a feeble foreign discipleship to be set up with the negation of citizenship for a basis. It is absurd to pretend to regard the cases of France and England and America, where there is a large degree of personal liberty and specific means of reforming the State and minor institutions, as on a par with that of Russia. It is possible to run the Russian *Mir* without resort to the ballot-box, because a small body of men can nearly always afford to wait till the minority capitulates. If the London County Council were conducted on that principle millions of people might be robbed of light and water, trams and trains, and workmen's dwellings.

"Participation in the Government," says Tolstoy, "would be very well if it could coincide with the aim of human life." That it must frequently, if not always, so coincide seems to be an obvious deduction from the immensity and complexity of our social relationships. An Englishman may turn his back upon his social duties even to the point of refusing to vote, but he cannot thrust off obligations and relationships which are as ubiquitous as the air and sunshine, and reach easily to the top of the pillar of St. Simon Stylites, or to the heart of a farm colony in glorious Surrey.

It is in its native surroundings that this last stage of Tolstoyism has its chief justification. There it takes in the first place the character of an overwhelming indictment of political and religious oppression. At last, after the lapse of centuries, the Tsars have found a man whom, though he has challenged them to their very face, they dare not touch. They have thwarted him from first to last—in his literary work, in his agricultural and educational experiments, in the propagation of his gospel; yet to-day he has an immense congregation among his own *mujiks* and the educated classes all over the world. "My Confession," "My Religion," and "The Gospels Harmonised" were all suppressed promptly by the Censor, and the last-named work was said to have been solemnly burned by order of the Holy Synod; yet they circulate widely in manuscript. All of which, beside giving this brave old man a worldwide audience, has perhaps helped to harden him in the occasionally eccentric exaggerations which are the natural antithesis of the brutal despotism against which he is rebelling. As to the comparative value of his own method of revolt, and those more peremptory methods sanctioned by the history of the struggle for liberty in all times and climes, we are not called upon to pass judgment, or to do more than express sympathy with every effective protest against the reign of brute force. On his way home after his wonderful journey into the recesses of Russia's great convict colony, Mr. George Kennan visited the Count at Yasnaya Polyana, and challenged him plainly on this point :—

"He began to question me about the journey to Siberia from which I had just returned ; and I—mindful of my promise to the exiles—began to tell him what I knew about Russian administration and the treatment of political convicts. It soon became evident that he was not to be surprised, or shocked, or aroused by any such information as I had to give him. He listened attentively, but without any manifestation of emotion, to my descriptions of exile life, and drew from the storehouse of his own experience as many cases of administrative injustice and oppression that were new to me as I could give that were new to him. He was evidently familiar with the whole subject, and had with regard to it well-settled views which were not to be shaken by a few additional facts not differing essentially from those that he had previously considered. I finally asked him whether resistance to such oppression was not justifiable.

"That depends," he replied, 'upon what you mean by resistance. If you mean persuasion, argument, protest, I answer Yes ; if you mean violence—No. I do not believe that violent resistance to evil is ever justifiable under any circumstances. . . . The revolutionists whom you have seen in Siberia undertook to resist evil by violence, and what has been the result ? Bitterness and misery and hatred and bloodshed ! The evils against which they took up arms still exist, and to them has been added a mass of previously non-existent human suffering. It is not in that way that the kingdom of God is to be realised on earth.'

"I cannot now repeat from memory all the arguments and illustrations with which Count Tolstoy enforced his views and fortified his position ; but I still remember the eloquence and earnestness with which they were presented and the deep impression made upon me by the personality of the speaker. . . . At last I made an effort to escape from the enthrallment of Count Tolstoy's strong personal influence by proposing to him questions which would necessitate the application of his general principles to specific cases. . . . I related to him many cases of cruelty, brutality, and oppression which had come to my knowledge in Siberia, and at the end of every recital I said to him, 'Count Tolstoy, if you had been there and had witnessed that transaction would you not have interfered with violence ?' He invariably answered, 'No.'"

Faced by one such concrete case, the Count argued the necessary injustice of violent reprisals. The Government officers might be acting under a sense of duty, or under orders; or in resisting them other and guiltless persons might be injured; probably all of them would have innocent families, who would be hurt if they were hurt. In any case violent interference must always create new centres of enmity, injustice, and misery. Mr. Kennan produced a written account of the desperate "hunger-strike" of female political prisoners in the Irkutsk prison in December, 1884:—

"Count Tolstoy read three or four pages of the manuscript with a gradually clouding face, and then returned it to me. His manner and his subsequent conversation conveyed to my mind the impression that he was already overburdened with a consciousness of human misery, and that he shrank from the contemplation of more suffering which he was powerless to relieve, and which could not change his views with regard to the principles that should govern human conduct.

"‘I have no doubt,’ he said, ‘that the courage and fortitude of these people are heroic, but their methods are irrational and I cannot sympathise with them. They resorted to violence, knowing that they rendered themselves liable to violence in return, and they are suffering the natural consequences of their mistaken action. I cannot imagine any darker conception of hell than the state of some of those unfortunate people in Siberia, whose hearts are full of bitterness and hatred and who at the same time are absolutely powerless even to return evil for evil. If,’ he added after a moment’s pause, ‘they had only changed their views a little—if they had adopted the course which seems to me the only right one to pursue in dealing with evil—what might not such a people have done for Russia! Mine is the true revolutionary method. If the people of the empire refuse, as I believe they should refuse, to render military

service—if they decline to pay taxes to support that instrument of violence, an army—the present system of government cannot stand. The proper way to resist evil is to absolutely refuse to do evil either for one's self or for others.'

"'But,' I said, surprised by this advocacy of a revolutionary method which seemed to me utterly impracticable and visionary, 'the Government *forces* its people to render military service and pay taxes—they *must* serve and pay or go to prison.'

"'Then let them go to prison,' he rejoined. 'The Government cannot put the whole population in prison; and if it could it would still be without material for an army and without money for its support.'"

Here, then, is not a mere philosophy of the study; not a mere variation of the spirit of Naturalistic Individualism which moved Ibsen and Whitman and Thoreau and so many other modern apostles of progress; not a mere fanaticism of the farm-colony or the pillar-top; but the germ of a method of revolt which may possibly prove less "impracticable and visionary" than it appeared to the American mind of Mr. Kennan. In these days of Maxim guns and high explosives the old methods of revolt, even if they appealed, as they once did, to the oppressed peoples, are virtually impossible. In fact the aims as well as the method of the old *coup d'état* have lost their charm: the failure of constitutions and parliaments to solve the economic problem has killed the faith which was so robust a century ago. The temperament of the Russian people unites with their geographic and economic circumstances to rob a merely political change of its attractiveness, and to make an organised armed insurrection more difficult than in any other Western country. Despite ability,

courage, and devotion, which have perhaps never been equalled in any similar crisis, the revolutionary movement of twenty years ago was a complete failure. It is true that in the meantime a strong class of city workmen has been growing up ; but they are and long will be as much weaker than the English workmen of, say, the Chartist period, as the present Russian Government is stronger than the English Government of that day. On the other hand we see the steady progress of that most remarkable and now widespread peasantist movement of which Tolstoyism is not the cause but the consequence ; whose most remarkable concrete feature is the outbreak, among whole communities, of passive resistance, not in theory alone but in practice ; increasing still in spite of all persecution ; perfectly spontaneous, self-reliant, colossal in its silent confidence, endurance, power of daily holiness. This is too large and obscure a question for an English opinion to be worth anything. I only suggest that the strike against military service and payment of taxes and the boycott of all agents of the State which rests on this twin base lie exactly in the line of the temperament and capacities of the Russian people, and that the possibilities of such a plan of campaign among an agricultural people are so vast as to give ground for no little hope and fear. There is an intuition of a prudential as well as of an idealist kind ; it is above all in his logical expression of that intuition that Tolstoy becomes for us outsiders the Grand Mujik.

Our Promethean critic finds a yet freer field for his powers amid the barriers which block the way

to a worldwide fraternity. With what shrewdness, what quick rapier-thrusts, he pricks the bubble of an Anglo-Russian alliance!—an idea which, as he told Mr. Stevens, “interested him no more than the man in the moon. But if any one were to try to bring about a feeling of *brotherhood* between the English and Russian *peoples*, such a work would greatly interest him, for it would be of lasting benefit to humanity. ‘Peace and Goodwill’ was only to be brought about by peoples themselves.” “Patriotism and Christianity” is perhaps the strongest tract ever written in support of international brotherhood. It was suggested by the extravagances of the Franco-Russian festivities in 1893, which the Count compares to a morbid psychic epidemic that broke out once in Russia—a disease that was at bottom “the cry of a sick population, a prayer for deliverance from drunkenness, and for improved educational and sanitary conditions.” The only difference was that in one case a few scores of poor, harmless country folk had gone mad, “whereas in the other case millions of people have lost their reason who possess immense sums of money and means of violence—rifles, cannon, fortresses, ironclads, mélinite, dynamite—and with, moreover, at their disposal, the most effective means for communicating their insanity: the post, telegraph, telephone, the entire Press, and every class of magazine, which print the infection with the utmost haste, and distribute it throughout the world.” One absurdity of such festivities is that the leaders on both sides always pose as the peace-keepers of the world, which is “as if a man should come into a peaceful company and commence energetically to

assure every one present that he has not the least intention to knock out any one's teeth, blacken their eyes, or break their arms, but has only the most peaceful ideas for passing the evening." Moreover, there is the odd fact that though no one is thinking of war, millions are being spent and millions of men exercised in preparation for it! It is said this is to insure peace. Why, then, are the military advantages of the various alliances trumpeted throughout the Press, cultured or popular, of Europe? Why in school-books, and in a multitude of other ways, are the lawfulness, profit, and necessity of war constantly urged? The suggestion that any alliance of Governments depends on popular sympathies is "a most evident and insolent falsehood, inexcusable, iniquitous," against which this Russian, on behalf of millions of his fellow-countrymen, protests with indignation and disgust. Here is one of a number of kinetographs of war in its shameful beginning and its horrid end:—

"Before we can look round the usual ominous, absurd proclamation will appear in the papers:—

"We, by God's grace, the autocratic great Emperor of All Russia, King of Poland, Grand Duke of Finland, &c., &c., proclaim to all our true subjects that, for the welfare of these our beloved subjects, bequeathed by God into our care, we have found it our duty before God to send them to slaughter. God be with us."

"The bells will peal, long-haired men will dress in golden sacks to pray for successful slaughter. And the old story will begin again, the awful customary acts. The editors of the daily Press will begin virulently to stir men up to hatred and manslaughter in the name of patriotism, happy in the receipt of an increased income. Manufacturers, merchants, contractors for military stores will hurry joyously about their business, in

the hope of doubled receipts. All sorts of Government officials will buzz about, foreseeing a possibility of purloining something more than usual. The military authorities hurry hither and thither, drawing double pay and rations, and with the expectation of receiving for the slaughter of other men various silly little ornaments which they so highly prize, as ribbons, crosses, orders, and stars. Idle ladies and gentlemen will make a great fuss, entering their names in advance for the Red Cross Society, and ready to bind up the wounds of those whom their husbands and brothers will mutilate, and they will imagine that in so doing they are performing a most Christian work.

‘And, smothering despair within their souls by songs, licentiousness, and wine, men will trail along, torn from peaceful labour, from their wives, mothers, and children—hundreds of thousands of simple-minded, good-natured men with murderous weapons in their hands—anywhere they may be driven. They will march, freeze, hunger, suffer sickness, and die from it, or finally come to some place where they will be slain by thousands, or kill thousands themselves with no reason—men whom they have never seen before, and who neither have done nor could do them any mischief. And when the number of sick, wounded, and killed becomes so great that there are not hands enough left to pick them up, and when the air is so infected with the putrifying scent of the “food for powder” that even the authorities find it disagreeable, a truce will be made, the wounded will be picked up anyhow, the sick will be brought in and huddled together in heaps, the killed will be covered with earth and lime, and once more all the crowd of deluded men will be led on and on till those who have devised the project weary of it, or till those who thought to find it profitable receive their spoil.

“And so once more men will be made savage, fierce, and brutal, and love will wane in the world, and the Christianising of mankind, which has already begun, will lapse for scores and hundreds of years. And so once more the men who reaped profit from it all, will assert with assurance that since there has been a war there must needs have been one, and that other wars must follow, and they will again prepare future generations for a continuance of slaughter, depraving them from their birth.”

Patriotism, Tolstoy argues, is either (as Dr. Johnson said) "the last refuge of scoundrels" who profit by it, or it is a momentary artificial excitement produced mainly by governmental machinery, the Press, schools, and other influences, which never springs spontaneously among the working people. He gives some quaint instances of how public demonstrations are manufactured in Russia. The ancient sentiment of Fatherland can hardly exist amid the huge modern federations of states, and now that the chief interests of men's lives are so often located outside their own countries. So patriotism implies aggression on one hand, slavery on the other, its base being an immoral subordination of the individual to governmental authority, of the many to the one; it is the chief support of all despotism and violence, and its abandonment must precede any universal reign of peace and love. It is the constant excuse for persecution. "Christianity gains by its own methods everything good for which patriotism seeks; thus making patriotism superfluous, unnecessary, and a hindrance like a lamp by daylight." In lengthy letters to different correspondents, Tolstoy has applied similar arguments to the difference between England and the United States in regard to Venezuela, to the case of a young Dutchman who refused to serve in the National Guard, publishing his reasons for so refusing, and to the example of the Dukhobortsy, to whom, he suggests, the Nobel bequest to him who has best served the cause of peace in a given year might fittingly be given.¹

¹ These letters may be found in the London *Daily Chronicle* of

Between these poles of personal and international morality lies the no less difficult and momentous region of the "social question," revolving about the two main problems of Labour and Purity. But before we come to these we must hark back for a moment to an experience which stimulated the movement in Tolstoy's mind and determined its social direction. This was his visit to Moscow in 1881, the Census year, and his investigations in the slums of the ancient city—told under a favourite Russian title, "What's to Be Done?" in a book which is an admirable example of his style and temper. It is quaint to read of his disenchantment with the city beggars, and his astonishment to find that men were arrested and imprisoned for begging in the name of Christ. "For the sake of exercise" he contracted the habit of going to the Sparrow Hills (two or three miles from the heart of the city, on the south) and working there with a couple of peasants at sawing wood. Here he found that lurid swearing "appeared to be the generally accepted manner of speech in these parts." But very much worse were his discoveries among the outcasts of the common lodging-houses. City squalor and degradation exceeded in horror his worst imaginings, and, as always, the result was, not a new set of platonic opinions, but a sense, keen as a knife, of personal duty unfulfilled :—

"With a sense of having committed some crime I returned home. There I entered along the carpeted steps into the rug-

March 17, 1896, and the *New Age* of November 18 and 25, 1897, respectively.

covered hall, and having taken off my fur coat sat down to a meal of five courses, served by two footmen in livery with white ties and white gloves.

"And a scene of the past came suddenly before me. Thirty years ago I saw a man's head cut off under the guillotine in Paris before a crowd of thousands of spectators. I was aware that the man had been a great criminal; I was acquainted with all the arguments in justification of capital punishment for such offences. I saw this execution carried out deliberately; but at the moment that the head and body were severed from each other by the keen blade, I gasped, and realised in every fibre of my being that all the arguments which I had hitherto heard upon capital punishment were wickedly false . . . and that I, both by my silence and my non-interference, was now an aider, abetter, and participator in the sin. Similar convictions were now again forced upon me when I beheld the misery, cold, hunger, and humiliation of thousands of my fellow-men . . . and I by my own personal habits of luxury was a promoter of that evil."

He argued the matter out in this wise with a friend one day,

"but with such warmth and so angrily that my wife rushed in from the adjoining room to ask what had happened. It appeared that I had, without being aware of it, shouted out in an agonised voice, gesticulating wildly, 'We should not go on living in this way! we must not live so! we have no right!' I was rebuked for my unnecessary excitement; I was told that I could not talk quietly upon any question; that I was irritable; and it was pointed out to me that the existence of such misery was no reason for embittering the life of my home-circle."

At first this torture of sympathy was mollified by a sense of virtue arising in the pursuit of philanthropic schemes. Levine was going to give his old Charity Organisation ideal a new chance in this new sphere—

"I began to collect money and enlist men who wished to help in the work, and who would in company with the Census officers visit all the nests of pauperism, entering into relations with the poor, finding out the details of their needs, helping them with money and work, sending them out of Moscow, placing their children in schools and their old men and women in homes and houses of refuge. I thought, moreover, that from those who undertook this work there could be formed a permanent Society which should by degrees stifle pauperism at its very birth, accomplishing this task not so much by cure as by prevention. . . . Then all of us who were rich could go on living in all our luxury as before."

But the Muscovite nobles, burgesses, and officials could not rise even to this opportunity. The Count wrote an article and read it from "proof" at a Census meeting in the Town Hall, "hesitating and blushing till my cheeks burned again, so uncomfortable did I feel." And his hearers appeared no less uncomfortable. "I noticed that they were shy of looking me straight in the face, as one often hesitates to look in the face of a good-natured man who is talking nonsense. The same impression was produced upon the editor of the paper, on my son, my wife, and various other people." But this was only the preliminary to the discovery of a still greater obstacle. As Census officer in a district which included the lowest circle of poverty and vice, he began to realise that these people had very various needs, and that to feed and clothe them, like so many domestic animals, even if it were possible, would leave the heart of the problem unsolved. Among the three main classes of them—out-of-works, prostitutes, and children—he began to feel that the case of the first was a mirror

of his own case, and that what they needed was not philanthropy but a gospel of natural labour ; while the only help for the women was a gospel of purity, which equally would revolutionise their life.

It was not till six years later that the volume on "Work" was written, and then under a different influence. In 1885 there came to Tolstoy an old *mujik* named Timothy Bondareff, from a far village in the Siberian district of Minussinsk. He related how, as a member of the sect of Sabbatists, he had gone beyond the New to the Old Testament, and had found the social law of obligatory manual labour laid down in Genesis. He had learned to write in order to spread this truth, and at the age of sixty-five years had set to work upon a disquisition composed in the style of Biblical verselets. He had sent the manuscript to the Tsar only to be repulsed ; the Censor did not even authorise him to print his little book. Now he came to the man who was already known far and wide as the peasant's friend. Of course the Count was sympathetic : this was confirmation not only of his specific opinions, but of his faith in the mind of the common people. He edited Bondareff's manuscript, and after a time he got it published in the magazine *Russian Wealth*, with his own comments.¹ We need not enlarge upon this quaint specimen of *mujik* philosophy, the main burden of which is that the proper business of man is manual work for the support of the family, and of

¹ In the French translation the reader will get not only Bondareff's argument and Tolstoy's article upon it, but also an explanatory introduction by M. Amédée Pagès.

woman the rearing of children, and that neither the possession of wealth nor any other occupation is a good excuse for the neglect of these duties. "This work," says Tolstoy, "is in my opinion remarkable for its force, its clearness, the beauty of its language, the sincerity of conviction that one feels in every line, and above all for the importance of the truth and the depth of the fundamental thought." It has all the naiveté and shrewdness of the class to which its author belonged, and it is interesting for the calculation that forty days' work per annum would suffice for the earning of a living. That this would leave in an ideal state eight-ninths of men's time unprovided for is a point which neither the *mujik* nor his noble editor seem to have thought worth discussing. Tolstoy, while accepting the general theory, protests vigorously against Bondareff's idea that work is still to be regarded as a punishment for some imagined primeval sin. Work (like the duty of motherhood) is not the sadness but the gladness of life. It is neither a punishment nor a distraction, but an essential vital function of healthy manhood and womanhood, and, in conjunction with charity (in the olden Christian sense), the foundation of moral reform. The merit of the humble preacher is that he sets aside all the multitude of minor and frivolous aims in favour of this all-important one, which generally remains hidden beneath them.

"If we admit that what is called Holy Scripture is not the work of God, but of men ; and if on the other hand what is purely and simply human writing is considered by us as coming from God, let us not forget that there is some reason for all this.

Superstitious men call it the writing of God, because it is more profound than all human science, because in spite of continual refutations it has come down to our own day and has not lost its Divine renown, because it affirms one of the inevitable laws of human life. . . .

"We are so much embroiled amid a multitude of religious, social, and domestic laws which we have imposed upon ourselves; we have invented so many commandments—enunciating, as Isaiah said, rule upon rule, one for this, one for that—that we have completely lost the sense of what is good and what is bad. One says mass, another recruits the army or pays the military tax, a third judges, a fourth studies, a fifth doctors, a sixth teaches; all, in fact, on various pretexts, evade Bread-Work, throwing it upon others, and forgetting there are men who die of fatigue and hunger. But before giving the people priests, soldiers, judges, doctors, professors, it is necessary to know whether it dies of hunger. . . . There is a first duty and a last; and one cannot fulfil the last without having fulfilled the first, just as one cannot harrow the land before one has ploughed it."

Exploitation of poverty or indifference to it is "one of the most ancient and most wicked temptations which assail men," especially supported as it now is by "the astute and diabolical theory of the Division of Labour." But universal manual occupation would destroy the hateful distinction of employer and employed, would clip the wings of luxury and covetousness, and would set the cart of society on its wheels again. Indeed, there is here the heart of Christ's teaching, which "resides neither in laws nor in commandments, but only in a revelation of the meaning of life." The essay ends with a touching appeal to the reader to question his own heart, and to go among those who seem the low but are really the high, and to taste the pleasure of helping them in the "struggle against nature."

In 1891, in an open letter to a Frenchman, Tolstoy returned to the subject, declaring the first test of sincerity in either Christian, philosophical, or humanitarian principles in our age to be to fall back on self-supplying toil, to employ others as little and work for others as much as possible—a rule which “gives coherence to our acts, imparts a meaning to our lives, confers a blessing on our persons, solves all the doubts and difficulties that perplex us, and causes all the factors of our existence, including intellectual activity, science, and art, to fall naturally into their proper places.” And yet again¹ he draws a deep distinction between this gospel of Bread-Work, as an organic function, and the “stupid exercises of the rich and well-fed,” and even those less absurd but hardly less pernicious forms of feverish activity, encouraged by so many modern teachers, which are “in our defectively organised society an agent of moral anesthesia, like tobacco, wine, and other refuges from the disorder and emptiness of existence.” During the last few years he has become very much enamoured of Henry George’s “system for abolishing idleness, landlordism, and the new slavery,”² and he has more than once declared his opinion that if the Tsar would nationalise the land, declare absolute liberty of conscience, and establish the liberty of the press, “all the rest would come right.”

¹ “Le Non-Agir,” *Cosmopolis* for March, 1897, in a reply to an address of M. Zola to the Paris Students’ Association, and a letter of M. Alex. Dumas in regard thereto.

² See two open letters in the *New Age*, November 11, 1897.

In his sixtieth year Tolstoy wrote the much-abused novel "The Kreutzer Sonata," which, in the form of a story culminating in the murder of an unfaithful wife, is a terrific exposure of the degradation of woman to serve man's sensuality which is commonly sanctioned throughout society, and the depravity of marriage founded not on harmony of affections and ideals, but on fleshly and "romantic" passion. The story itself is well balanced, the language temperate, the characters speak like the men and women we meet in daily life, mixtures of truth and falsehood fused by the selfishness of bitter individual experience. There is no favouritism and—oh, blessed thing!—never a line of padding. The assassin tells his tale in a railway train during a long Russian journey, one of the most natural stages for such a meeting of types and such a confession. The transactions of the marriage-market; the training of children for a perverted life; the centring of art upon the production of bodily charm, "toys for man's pleasure"; the customary masculine license and the inequality of shameful results; the religious, poetic, and social laudation of legal concubinage; the tragedy of incompatible tempers aggravated by jealousy and hate; the last abandonment of lust, and betrayal of wifehood and motherhood,—the revelation of the awful evil and hypocrisy of all this proceeds with the fearless, merciless sureness of a demonstration in anatomy. There are some exaggerations, but there is no extravagance, and the main argument seems to me to be unerringly sound. To talk of "indecent" is fatuous, and something worse when it bars the way

against feeble truth-seekers.¹ It is not over "The Kreutzer Sonata" but over the "postscript," and the supplementary essay on "The Relation of the Sexes"² that serious controversy may naturally arise; and then the question is whether Tolstoy's ultra-

¹ What, then, will posterity say of the unfortunate Miss Hapgood, who after undertaking the English translation refused to publish it, declaring that she had never read anything like it in her life and hoped she never would again (*Review of Reviews*, i. 332). See also *New York Nation*, April 17, 1890: "'Too frank and not decent' was one of the Petersburg verdicts upon this 'Kreutzer Sonata.' This is so true that although thus forewarned I was startled at the idea that it could possibly be beneficial, and, destroying the translation which I had begun, I wrote promptly to decline the task. It is probable that the author and his blindly devoted admirers will consider that I have committed an unpardonable sin. . . . I find the language too excessive in its candour. At the same time I admit that if that subject was to be treated in that way no other language would have served the purpose. . . . A violent and roughly worded attack upon the evils of animal passion. In that sense it is moral. Translation, even with copious excisions, is impossible in my opinion, and also inadvisable. . . ."

² Translated and published with the essay on "Work," and papers on "Alcohol and Tobacco," "Drunkenness among the Governing Classes," and "Church and State," under the general title "Vicious Pleasures." Mr. Halpérine Kaminsky's French version is rendered more valuable by the addition of a strong and witty essay by Alexandre Dumas, generally in support of Tolstoy, and supplementary letters by other leading Frenchmen—nearly all on the Drink Question. Charcot is against extremes: Jules Claretie and Francisque Sarcey never drink spirits nor smoke; Alphonse Daudet wrote as a hopelessly happy victim of both habits; Gounod agreed with Tolstoy as to the effect of alcohol and tobacco on the brain, but disagreed in regard to the conscience; Jules Simon declares himself a great enemy of alcohol; and so on.

puritanism has support in the facts and capacities of human nature. For in these later papers—as though the momentum of his own indictment of existing conditions had carried the author over into an ecstasy of Utopian castle-building—we are wafted away from the gross realities of this present state to that ideal time and clime of which all the prophets have spoken, where there will be no more marrying and giving in marriage, and when, the service of the flesh being ended, humanity will be ready for its translation.

This ultimate question is not without interest, but it is not the one on which the reputation and influence of a great ethical teacher can be staked. The poets must be permitted their kingdom of heaven. Nor, on the other hand, can the general truth of Tolstoy's criticism, except in minor details, be disposed of. The difficult, necessary question is rather whether he is right in his view of the almost necessary antagonism of flesh- and spirit-marriage. It seems probable that this conclusion only came to him at the end of his major task, when his mind was full of the prostitution of the higher faculties of manhood and womanhood to certain pretended "physical needs." He saw that passion was universally stimulated by the luxury and idleness of modern city life, and weakened by healthy physical labour. His mind was revolted, as that of the decent countryman is amid the London streets, by the widening toleration of conjugal infidelity and the negation of parental obligation. The selfishness of love was one of the oldest themes of his art; now that all selfishness seemed evil to him it became an easy thing to declare marriage to be

only a temporary compromise, and passion an obstacle to the moral life. But he does not therefore utter a sweeping decree in favour of universal celibacy; he does indeed recognise that "that ideal alone is true which being inaccessible admits infinite gradations, in proportion as we draw nearer and nearer to it." The main argument is the need to cleanse sex affection from animalism. Probably as to some concrete points Tolstoy himself is indeterminate; at any rate in "Work While ye have the Light!" he reasserts his old view of the right family life through the lips of the Christian Pamphilius, who is made to say to Julian, "Never again utter those terrible words that a Christian life is possible only for those who are childless. On the contrary, one might rather say that to lead the life of a pagan is excusable only in those who are without children." And as Tolstoy's ideal womanhood is all summed up in the word Maternity, it is difficult to see how he can press the idea of celibacy further without turning another logical somersault. There are few original and quickly moving minds which do not present these little inconsistencies. A rather more serious question—one which must be asked even amid our admiration of "Anna Karenina"—is whether Tolstoy really understands the complexity of the sense-activities which under the name of Love we certainly worship in this country. A Russian friend declared to Mr. Stead that the Count had never been in love and did not know what it was: that is gossip and cannot be worth much. But I cannot help recalling once more some words of his description of the *mujik*

Karatayeff in "War and Peace": "Special attachments, friendships, loves, as *Piérre* understood them, Karatayeff had none ; but he liked all men, and lived in a loving way with all with whom his life brought him in contact, and especially men—not any particular men—but such as were in his sight." Whether it be just to suppose that in some measure this describes the author's own temperament also, or not, we may be thankful for these fresh, courageous, and dramatic contributions to the most radical of social questions. Ibsen gave us a picture of the contemporary "*Doll's House*," with hints toward a cure in feminine emancipation and education. Tolstoy, with no less power, tackles the more difficult side of the problem ; and we are no less indebted to him, even though his literary success could in the nature of things hardly be as great.

IX

THE GRAND MUJIK

“**M**AN does not live by bread alone.” Can it be, then, that the new Ethic means death to olden Art?

In Tolstoy's own case it has certainly not proved so. The artist has persisted in him throughout—in the deliberate choice of dramatic form as well as in qualities of style, insight into the play of character and circumstance, sure feeling for the proportionate significance of thoughts and things, the scent for effective illustration which gives added point to his biographic gifts. All the labours of the last twenty years have not disabled him from producing, beside “The Kreutzer Sonata,” a number of short, popular tales, two longer stories which will count with his very finest work—“The Death of Ivan Ilyitch,” in 1884, and “Master and Man,” in 1895; two plays—“The Dominion of Darkness” (1886) and “Fruits of Enlightenment” (1889); and two essays on æsthetics, in the larger of which nothing less than a new æsthetic theory is propounded. In “Ivan Ilyitch” there is, accentuating the grimness of the narrative, a marked

satiric note, which is rare in Tolstoy's pages. The wonderful study of the narrow but not odious old bureaucrat's illness culminates in his prolonged struggle with death. He is not prepared to accept Nature's decree, and is unpitied by his wife and daughter, who discuss opera-glasses and Bernhardt beside his bed of agony. Only two friends remain faithful and ungrudgingly helpful to the last—his little son and his favourite servant Gerasim. During these awful days he fought for life in "the black hole into which an invisible, invincible power was thrusting him." Suddenly "he was whirled through the hole, at the end of which some light seemed to shine upon him." It happened as it sometimes does in a railway carriage, when you think that you are going forward and are really going backward and suddenly realise the true direction. It is a part of Tolstoy's most serious intention that men and women, young and old, should be reminded of the inexorable fact of Death; and to those who think of it for the first time there is pain as well as enlightenment in reading these scenes. But in "The Dominion of Darkness" we reach a deeper hell: to witness these lurid details of village criminality can hardly be profitable to any one but those who are in some near degree responsible for the conditions which breed dire social disease; while this display of squalor and bestiality cannot but deepen the gloom of every mind interested in the problems of Russian life. "Fruits of Enlightenment," a comedy in four acts, is a half-humorous revelation of middle-class banalities. In the first act, placed in the hall

of a large town house, a group of peasants, who have come up from the country to arrange for the purchase of some land, is set in contrast with the sons of the master, who discuss spiritualism and other sports; the domestic servants, who vary their slavish routine with practical joking; and the mistress who, coming downstairs between the milliner and the doctor, in fear of dirt and microbes, sweeps the waiting peasants out of the house. The second act takes place in the kitchen, where the ejected *mujiks* have taken refuge, and gives the servants' point of view. The remaining scenes picture, with a dry humour like that which brightens Tolstoy's short stories but is hardly ever seen in his larger works, and with a merry imitation of "mediumistic" jargon, an old-fashioned hypnotic *séance*, quite reminiscent of "Mr. Sludge," and end in something like screaming farce. Tolstoy's abomination of "psychic" tomfoolery had been shown before. It is said that this hot satire was suggested by a visit to a certain chemistry professor, who had been one of the numerous Russian victims of the table-turners.

There is nothing in modern literature, perhaps in any Western literature, comparable with the short tales and parables, millions of copies of which, in rough pamphlet form, are now sold for a few farthings apiece throughout *mujikdom*. Some of the strongest of them were produced in rapid succession: thus, "Where Love is there God is also," "Ivan the Fool," and the "Texts for Wood-Cuts," in 1885; and "The Three Mendicants," and several shorter "popular legends" in the following year. Yet each

is a clean-cut gem, flashing mother-wit out of the familiar scenes of lowly life, illustrating single and simple aspects of the Tolstoyan morality with the familiar directness of Æsop and the "Arabian Nights," and succeeding as they did just because they reported the raw wisdom of the popular heart. Here is Martin Avdyitch, the humble shoemaker, succouring some poor fellows and receiving mysterious assurances of self-rewarded blessedness; there is Peter Mikyeff, the peace-loving *mujik*, carrying a mystic candle on his plough-shaft, and conquering the cruel overseer by sheer patience:—

"The overseer ceased to make ridicule, laid down the guitar, hung his head, and fell into thought. He kept sitting there and sitting there; then he sent out the cook and the starosta, lay down on the bed and began to sigh, began to groan as though a cart-load of sheaves lay on him. His wife came to him, began to talk with him; he did not reply to her. He only said—

"'He has conquered me. Now it's my turn.' His wife began to say to him, 'Yes, go and let them off.' . . .

"'I am lost,' he said; 'he has conquered me'; and he kept repeating, 'He has conquered, conquered.'"

Pakhom, the *mujik*, grows tired of the old scanty means, and is easily persuaded to go on a land-grabbing expedition to the country of the Bashkirs, who, he is told, have so much land that they can easily be induced or tricked into parting with it. So it seems! He can have as much as he can walk round in a day for a thousand roubles! "Pakhom was astonished. The Starshina laughed. 'It's all yours,' said he. 'Only one condition: if you don't get back within the day to the place from which you

start, your money is lost.'” Pakhom was joyful, got up early, and started off at a great rate. Further and further he got, more and more reluctant to limit so profitable a journey. A little miscalculation of the homeward way made him late ; and rushing to the starting-place a minute too late, he totters and collapses.

“ ‘Ay ! brave lad !’ shouted the Starshina. ‘You have got a good piece of land.’

“Pakhom’s man ran to him, tried to help him to his feet ; but a stream of blood pours from his mouth and he lies dead. The Bashkirs clucked their tongues, expressing their sorrow.

“Pakhom’s *rabotnik* took a hoe, dug a grave for him, made it just long enough, from head to foot, three *arshines*, and buried him.”

“Ivan the Fool” is a more direct attack upon established social institutions and ideals, and the fact that the story was passed—which surprised none more than its author—while permission to say and print the same thing in more prosaic fashion was refused, is a good illustration of the intelligence of the Muscovite Censorship.

“Master and Man,” the latest story from this magic pen (1895), is a very epic of humble heroism, a more full and delicate piece of work than any of the popular sketches, but marked like them by unpretentious, unspectacular, unsentimental truthfulness. It tells of the redeeming self-sacrifice of a master to save the rustic servant whom he had so long exploited. The two men are lost in a snowstorm. Hour after hour passes, during which they slowly come together across the gulfs of ancient custom. Without any

wordy industry, any effort after the picturesque, the wild waste of snow grows up vividly before the reader's eyes; and at the same time, by a thousand tiny human touches, he sees into the turmoil of these two desperate hearts. There is not a hint of preaching, unless it be in the reflection of the half-frozen Nikita :—

“The thought that he would die that night came upon him, seeming not very unpleasant nor very awful—not unpleasant, because his life had been no unbroken feast, but rather an incessant round of toil of which he began to weary; and not awful, because beyond the masters whom he served here, like Vasili Andreitch, he felt himself dependent upon the Great Master, upon Him who had sent him into this life. And he knew that even after death he must remain in the power of that Master, who would not treat him badly. ‘Is it a pity to leave what you are practised in and used to? Well, what’s to be done? You must get used to fresh things as well.’ ‘Sins,’ he thought, and recollected his drunkenness, the money wasted in drink, his ill-treatment of his wife, neglect of church and of the fasts, and all things for which the priest reprimanded him at the confessional. ‘Of course these are sins. But then, did I bring them on me myself? Whatever I am I suppose God made me so.’ Well, and about these sins? How can one help it? If God should bid him get up again still alive in the world; to go on with his labourer’s life, to care for other men’s horses, to carry other men’s corn to the mill, to again start drinking and renouncing drink, to continue the supply of money to his wife and that cooper, to watch his lad growing up—well, so be His holy will. Should God bid him arise in another world where all would be as fresh and bright as this world was in his young childhood, with the caresses of his mother, the games among the children, the fields, forests, skating in winter—arise to a life quite out of the common—then so be His holy will. And Nikita wholly lost consciousness.”

Vasili the master, alone in the snowdrift, had more

painful and feverish thoughts, and as his trouble deepened and no help came, prayed first to St. Nicholas, and then to other officials of the Divine Court. But even he "in some way clearly realised that the image, chasuble, tapers, priests, thanksgivings, and so forth, while very important and necessary in their place, in the Church, were of no service to him now, and that between these tapers and Te Deums and his own disastrous plight, there could be no possible relation." This is all the specific religion in the story, unless the climax is to be so taken, wherein the merchant realises that he has revived his servant at the cost of his own life :—

"He is surprised, but not at all disturbed by this. He divines that this is death, and is not at all disturbed even by that. And he remembers that Nikita is lying under him, and that he has got warm and is alive ; and it seems to him that he is Nikita and Nikita is he, that his life is not in himself but in Nikita. He makes an effort to listen and hears the breathing, even the slight snoring, of Nikita. 'Nikita is alive, and therefore I also am alive,' he says to himself triumphantly."

So he dies joyfully into freer life. It is in the loss of its own self-consciousness that the highest triumphs of art are achieved, and in this perfect piece of work I can point to only one little instance of what might have been deliberate artfulness ; the use of a ridge of wind-swept weeds amid the snowstorm as a suggestion of utter desolation and forlorn death, in the manner of a Wagner *motif*. Mr Howells' introduction to the American edition contains some sentences which deserve quotation :—

"The sketch is so very open and so very artless that it might seem almost too slight in texture. But it is really a masterpiece even as a story, and if any one thought that the story was all there was of the thing he would be lamentably mistaken. It is the drama of the race, playing itself in a moment, in a corner, as it has played itself through all history on the stage of the world. The art of the work is shown in the fact that nothing is forced in the action without or within, but all happens naturally and because it must. Most marvellous of all, however, and transcending the farthest reach of art, is that plunge of the light into the depths of being where it shows flickeringly, uncertainly, for one brief instant, the loss of individuality; where for a moment the man who had feels his unity, his identity, his essential convertibility, with the man who has not, as we shall perhaps feel our oneness with each other throughout eternity. I call this sublime divination, but I am half ashamed to praise it, as I am always half ashamed to praise one side of what Tolstoy does. I know that he is not doing his work for my praise or for any man's, but because he has found the secret of happiness, and longs to share it with us all."

The chief characteristics of Tolstoy's art have appeared in course of our narrative; and we need not repeat detailed allusions. The human mind springs unfailingly to new stimulus, and it is in the sudden outreachings of a primitive race that the most splendid flashes of imagination arise. The most important differences between the art of Tolstoy and that of Sophocles and the author of "King Lear" are due, not to intervening epochs of time, with their gain in scientific knowledge, but to different blends of blood and social circumstance. The success of the Russian novel lies in its appeal from the heart of a young country to the heart of the young in all countries. The old founts of inspiration have run

dry ; we stand as sadly in need of a new Renaissance as of a new Reformation.

“ Your creeds are dead, your rites are dead,
Your social order too.
Where tarries he, the power who said :
See, I make all things new ?

The millions suffer still, and grieve—
And what can helpers heal
With old-world cures men half believe
For woes they wholly feel ? ”

And again, as with Arnold's Obermann, it is to Eastern “ snows and pastoral huts ” that we look for hope. In the marvellous vitality, the earthiness, the frankness of this young literature, we slaves of the board-school and a licentious Press recover something of the sensitiveness of Elizabeth's Englishmen. It seems almost probable that, after all, the simplest language may hold the intensest force. In these unstrained descriptions, which thrill us as only the highest efforts of our highest poets do, we begin to realise the power of quietness. Children and women—the real ones—live again on the printed page. Perhaps this tremendous truthfulness is beyond the moral foot-rules supplied for us by the Board of Trade and the Established Church ; yet it is evidently a noteworthy phenomenon. Moreover, it appears to be possible to abandon the mock-heroics of the old romance, and the absurdities of the current stage and lending-library, and to get a realism which is not mechanical and is untinged by brutality. Conven-

tions slide away imperceptibly. Good and bad appear side by side in the same individual, and we are no longer shocked. The classic man has gone the way of the economic man ; the grand sensational types of personality, the protagonists of anciently conventionalised passion, have vanished into thin air—and still we are interested. "Where," asks Tolstoy, at the end of the second part of "Sevastopol," "where in this story shall we find the exposure of that evil we ought all to avoid, the enunciation of that good we ought all to follow? Which of its characters is the villain and which is the hero? None ; for they are all good and they are all bad." And the reader does not complain. Why should he? He has found a whole gallery of new notabilities ; and he is rapidly getting past the stage in which he finds notabilities only in one, and that an obviously diseased, range of life. It is like happening upon a forgotten store of coal or wine in an old cellar. There is no hurt if for the moment the mere novelty of scenic colour adds to our enjoyment. We soon get below these surface impressions to the heart which is the fellow of our own feeble heart. The tearing haste of French impressionism was something very different from this wholesome, lucid, manly, naturalness, with its passionate pity and sympathy. Well says Mr. Howells :—

"Whenever I open a page of Tolstoy's I am aware of the thrill and glow of wonder that filled me when I first began to read him. It is like the clasp of a great, warm hand, with the beat of a friendly heart in it—the heart of a man who neither looks down upon his fellow-man nor up to him, but meets him

on the common level of their humanity, and begins at once to live with him in the real things of his soul. No one else that I know of does this or does it in the same measure. This frank and simple kindliness is in him what style is in the merely literary author ; you know him by his truth as you know the other by his manner ; and if you are worthy of it, this truth has a strange power over you. It confesses you ; though it seems to be his truth you find it is your truth ; you have to own it, and that makes it yours."

Let it be granted that with the gain on the side of psychology there is a loss in the scenic setting. Many of the cheap-Jacks of the literary market-place have seen a larger variety than Tolstoy has of the surface-things of life ; none have so explored the secret places of the soul, or tracked human character through its slow development. In these labyrinths he has walked with a certitude that suggests some magic clue. For forty-five years his pen has been ceaselessly busy ; its rage is still untamed, its fertility undiminished ; and yet we do not recall a page in the whole library of his writing which is quite meaningless or unprofitable ; while "Sevastopol," "War and Peace," "Ivan Ilyitch," "Master and Man," are an abiding possession, and "Anna Karenina" stands higher than the highest point that even our own Meredith has reached. Supreme in insight, in criticism, and in dramatisation, it is himself which is the most interesting and powerful part of his work, his grim yet morbidly sensitive and sympathetic nature, his life-long spiritual travail ending in the naivest essays towards a purely rational religion, his noble work for the poor, his splendid onslaughts upon tyranny and greed, ringing out from the centre of the strongest despotism

in the world. It is this co-operate impression of a life and a literature which gives Tolstoy his unique and romantic place among the teachers of the Western democracies.

That he blunders, as he does, when he comes in these latter days to answer the ever delicate question of "What is Art?" need neither surprise nor trouble us much. Ever since he reached manhood—and scepticism—he has looked askance at the domain of beauty, as commonly understood. "Art is a lie," he groaned, after his brother's death in 1860; yet he recovered from this *malaise* sufficiently to produce his two great novels, and we have seen that in the last fifteen years he had not become scornful of the softer sides of human intercourse and the gentler aspects of nature. Nevertheless, it is only with careful qualification that Tolstoy can be called an artist. At any time during his life, with the possible exception of the few years following his first successes, long before he was known in this country, he would probably himself have strongly disowned the name. The art of "Anna Kárenina" is obvious and wonderful; but even there (especially in tracing the author's development, under the guise of Levine) one cannot help feeling that it is a by-product, the indeliberate, if not unconscious, secretion of a temperament which is, above all, philosophical, by turns ethical and scientific. In later years this bias of temperament has become more pronounced. It is heat men want, he always seems to be saying, not coal-gas or aniline dyes; which is at least more true in Russia than in England. He strives after a prac-

tical, not an ideal, harmony, relying chiefly not on thought but on will. For him Law, not Grace, is the channel of salvation ; in that respect he follows Moses more than Christ. Heretics will thank him for his manner of dealing with the Christian Scriptures ; but this confident anti-literalism is, in fact, only one of many exhibitions of contempt for outer forms, with some other of which the heretical artist may be less pleased. His qualities as a writer strengthen the trend of his mental interests, and his social circumstances intensify both. If Milton had lived in the Holy Russian Empire of to-day, he, too, would have turned in scorn from the artist's avocation.

Thus we were prepared for a severe judgment upon many forms and products of modern art. But Tolstoy has gone much further than this. He has lodged a thoroughgoing, almost a savage, indictment against all modern ideas of Art which rely upon a conception of beauty, and against all ideas of beauty into which pleasure enters as a leading constituent. Especially does he inveigh against what he calls the "Baumgartenian Trinity — Goodness, Beauty, and Truth ;" that is to say, the analysis of the object of mental and moral activity into "Beauty, the Perfect (the Absolute) recognised through the senses ; Truth, the Perfect perceived through reason ; Goodness, the Perfect reached by moral will"—which he traces no further back than Baumgarten (1714-1762). This is the starting-point of a hurried examination of modern æsthetic theories, the material for which appears to have come, for the most part, at second-hand from the works of Schasler, Kralik, Véron, and Knight

("Philosophy of the Beautiful"). Against Baumgarten, Tolstoy proceeds to quote two opposite schools—the one "recognising as the aim of art, not beauty, but goodness;" the other, "dividing the mission of art from the aim of goodness in the sharpest and most positive manner, makes external beauty the aim of art, and even limits that to visible beauty." The latter he finds developed in the definition of the source of beauty by Kant and Schiller, as "pleasure without practical advantage." A rapid review of succeeding German philosophers follows, which we may further abbreviate thus: Fichte: "Beauty exists, not in the world, but in the beautiful soul. Art is the manifestation of this beautiful soul, and its aim is the education, not only of the mind (that is the business of the *savant*), not only of the heart (the affair of the moral preacher), but of the whole man." Schelling: "Beauty is the perception of the infinite in the finite. And the chief characteristic of works of art is unconscious infinity. Art is the uniting of the subjective with the objective, of nature with reason, of the unconscious with the conscious, and, therefore, art is the highest means of knowledge." Hegel's æsthetic doctrine of Beauty as the manifestation of the Idea, and of art as the production of this appearance, is, says Tolstoy, "not only no clearer or better defined than the preceding ones; but is, if possible, even more cloudy and mystical." Finally we reach the English utilitarian and historical explanations foreshadowed by Burke, and elaborated by Spencer and other evolutionists, according to which artistic activity arises as a form of play, the pleasur-

able expenditure of superfluous energy, and also as an important weapon in sex and other social competition. All this "enchanted confusion and contradictoriness" Tolstoy resolves into two distinct definitions of beauty: "the one objective, mystical, merging this conception into that of the highest perfection, God—a fantastic definition, founded on nothing; the other, on the contrary, a very simple and intelligible subjective one, which considers beauty to be that which pleases." But the former he thinks is really only the latter re-stated; for "we acknowledge beauty to be something absolutely perfect only because we receive from the manifestation of this absolute perfection a certain kind of pleasure." This is about as summary a disposal of the Absolute as we have ever seen. Our moral Anarchist is not content, however, to reduce æsthetics to the sphere of pleasure in general; he insists that it is "nothing but the setting up as good of that which has pleased, and pleases, *us*—i.e., pleases *a certain class* of people;" a parasitic class, which keeps actors, singers, writers, in a humiliating and cruel thralldom. Even if we "put aside the conception of beauty, which confuses the whole matter," and examine the "latest and most comprehensible definitions of art," we shall find them all vitiated by the pleasure-idea—which is the very Devil!

By these stages we reach Tolstoy's own attempt to define art. It is, he says,

"a human activity, consisting in this—that one man consciously, by means of certain external signs, hands on to others

feelings he has lived through, and that other people are infected by these feelings, and also experience them. Art is not, as the metaphysicians say, the manifestation of some mysterious idea of beauty, or God ; it is *not*, as the æsthetical physiologists say, a game in which man lets off his excess of stored-up energy ; it is *not* the expression of man's emotions by external signs ; it is *not* the production of pleasing objects ; and, above all, it is *not* pleasure ; but it is a means of union among men, joining them together in the same feelings, and indispensable for the life and progress towards well-being of individuals and humanity."

The idea of summarising the great masters of the last two centuries—Kant, Goethe, Hegel, and the rest—into ten-line paragraphs, and dismissing them airily in other ten-line paragraphs, is quite characteristic of the precocity of the Russian iconoclast. Tolstoy's genius is unmistakable, and he commands the resources of the nineteenth century ; but what, after all, is a century of Russia beside the long ancestry of a Goethe ? Tolstoy is exerting an immense influence just now, and this influence will deepen and extend. His egotism enters our mind by the front door, driving our own egotism out at the back. He anticipates in the realm of intellect what his nation will presently affect in the world of affairs. But the aristocracy of Western culture is deeply founded ; its walls will not fall down at the trumpet-blast of a Muscovite pamphleteer. It is curious, and a little sad, to see a great man aiming at the great men of history that boomerang of the bourgeois critic, the charge of "enchanted confusion and contradictoriness." If these surface objections were to prevail, what would become of Tolstoy, who

at first view is indeed a most enchanting blend of contradictory qualities. Sympathy is the only safe road of criticism. With sympathetic insight there will appear only one contradiction in Tolstoy's career and work, which is the oneness and consistency underlying all the changing moods of his development. Fragments of Tolstoy are not Tolstoy, nor fragments of Goethe, Goethe; still less can all the multifarious meaning of science or art or religion be packed into a ten-line formula. A little reflection will show the reader that many of the attempts at definition which are opposed to each other in this essay are not contradictory, but only supplementary, or they represent another approach to the subject. Thus there is no contradiction between the Spencerian and the Goethean or Hegelian definitions—the one is historical, the other idealist. The man who sees St. Paul's from the nave does not contradict the spectator in Ludgate Hill. So most of these analytic and descriptive formulæ are quite reconcilable—some represent prospective, others retrospective attitudes; some abstract, others utilitarian, inquiries; the scientist is concerned with motivation, the metaphysician with the end; the matter even assumes a different shape to the producer and to the consumer. When Ruskin insists that "art is no recreation" and Schopenhauer says that "poetic gifts belong to the holidays, not the working days of life," they express two aspects of a truth in which the utilitarian and idealist views meet, and of which William Morris gave us a clearer glimpse when he wrote ("The Aims of Art"): "The aim of art is to destroy the curse of

labour, by making work the pleasurable satisfaction of our impulse towards energy, and giving to that energy hope of producing something worth its exercise."

To quote Ruskin and William Morris is to recall that Tolstoy, in ignoring them and others, does an injustice to Anglo-Saxon æstheticism and ethics. The active life of these two men was a noble crusade against the social evils which Tolstoy here again exposes, and especially against the support which art has often given to those two cardinal sins—idleness and cruelty. Against the art which is "the amusement of those whom we now call ladies and gentlemen" they waged a tireless, and not a solitary or ineffectual war. The fight is not yet won, nor will be for long enough; but it is not true generally that the subject-matter of art has degenerated into "the transmission of the feelings of pride, erotic mania, and discontent with life;" and, even in the heat of his indictment, Ruskin could admit that modern art had advanced greatly upon mediæval and ancient times in its compassionate recognition of the sufferings of the poor. Similarly Emerson (in whose opulent pages Tolstoy might have found a hundred enlightening suggestions) protested that "these solaces and compensations, this division of beauty from use, the laws of nature do not permit. As soon as beauty is sought, not from religion and love, but for pleasure, it degrades the seeker." It is such men as these who have made the art-consciousness of to-day. Thanks to them, every thinking man can make his various contribution to the knowledge of

the unknown, the definition of the eternally undefinable. Art is the incarnation of the Absolute in playful labour. It is the recreation of the universe in the human mind. It is the magnetism which draws the rough ore of earth into the heart for transformation to a higher usefulness. It is first an analysis, a detachment of the phenomena of sensation from their context in space and time, and then their synthesis into a purely human unity. Like morals and science, but by a purely sensuous process, it is the struggling together of finite and infinite. It is the ritual of the only Church Universal, the tribute of blood to spirit, the witness of a freedom impossible under the burden of this present yoke. It is the assimilation in the individual imagination, and the re-birth in the forms of awe and hope and joy, of the mystery, symmetry, tenderness, splendour that lie latent in the chaos of mere things ; those—

“ High instincts before which our mortal nature
Did tremble like a guilty thing surprised ;
Those shadowy recollections
Which, be they what they may,
Are yet the fountain light of all our day,
Are yet the master light of all our seeing ;
Uphold us, cherish us, and have power to make
Our noisy years seem moments in the being
Of the eternal silence.”

To tell the Englishman, nurtured on the Elizabethan dramatists, the poets of the Lakes, on Keats and Shelley, Wordsworth and Browning, and the P.R.B., that Art is none of these things, but is merely “ a means of union among men,” is to provoke a smile.

Nor is it more satisfying to read (chap. vi.) that "in every age and in every human society there exists a religious sense, common to that whole society, of what is good and what is bad ; and it is this religious conception that decides the value of the feelings transmitted by art." The profane will ask whether the railway train which Tolstoy abominates so heartily—or, if it be objected that a train does not embody feelings, let us say a telegram or an advertisement hoarding—is not a better "means of union" than the Venus of Milo, or the "Sonata Pathetique," and whether the value of "Anna Karenina" or the "Kreutzer Sonata" is to depend upon a nose-count of contemporary Russians. Has Art no special regard for the artist himself, no special relation to Nature? Tolstoy's formula is, indeed, covered by those utilitarian theories which he lightly dismisses. It is inadequate in that it gives no standard of excellence, no guide in discrimination ; it describes a method, not a substance, a motive, or an ideal. It would seem to allow, after all, for an art of dress, an art of cookery, and so on. It is all very well to bring, here also, the factor of distribution into prominence ; but distribution is not everything—is not by any means the chief thing in art. We may pass over the vague way in which Tolstoy uses the word "feelings," and his bold assertion that "every man is capable of experiencing every human feeling." A very great man may fail in manufacturing good definitions. "I cannot help laughing," said Goethe once, "at the æsthetical folk who torment themselves in endeavouring, by some abstract terms, to reduce to a conception

that inexpressible thing to which we give the name of beauty. Beauty is a primeval phenomenon which never makes an independent appearance, but the reflection of which is visible in a thousand different utterances of the creative mind, and is as various as Nature herself." The mischief is not in the definition alone, but in the train of thought which in the matter-of-fact English mind will suggest a *jehad* against pleasure and beauty as the last development of Tolstoy's Mujikism. In his seventh chapter he works himself into a frenzy against the conception of the ancient Greeks, that the beautiful and the good coincide—a "confusion of ideas," a gross misunderstanding, on which, he says, modern æsthetics is founded, although it arose simply out of "the low grade of the moral ideal," the "small moral development," of its authors, quaintly described as "a small, semi-savage, slave-holding people, who lived 2,000 years ago, who imitated the nude body extremely well, and erected buildings pleasant to look at." Whether "Plato's reasonings about beauty and goodness" are "full of contradictions" and "confusion of ideas" we need not stay to inquire; but does any man really think that the "moral ideal" of Plato and Socrates was of a "low grade"? We are hurried on, however, to still further extremes. "We have no ground," it appears, for the assertion that "the good, the beautiful, and the true are manifestations of one and the same metaphysical entity."

"Goodness is really the fundamental metaphysical conception which forms the essence of our consciousness. . . . Beauty

—if we do not want mere words, but speak about what we understand—beauty is nothing but what pleases us ; and, therefore, the notion of beauty not only does not coincide with goodness, but rather is contrary to it, for the good most often coincides with victory over the passions, but beauty is at the root of all our passions. . . . What we call truth is merely the correspondence of an expression, or of a definition of an object, with reality, or with an understanding of the object common to every one, and, therefore, it is a means of arriving at the good ; but the truth is not goodness, and often it does not even coincide with it. . . . With beauty, truth has not even anything in common, but, for the most part, is in contradiction to it, for truth generally exposes the deception and destroys illusion, which is the chief condition of beauty.”

If this were a mere jangle of terms, we might leave the partners in our “*Baumgartenian Trinity*” to fight it out among themselves, confident that, if goodness remained supreme, beauty and truth would hold their own as integral ideas. Those vast and age-old spheres of human activity, in which are contained the zest of life and the clues to its meaning, are not exploded so easily. It seems foolish to deny to art any connection with goodness, and at the same time to complain that contemporary art is degrading and cruel. Tolstoy’s promiscuous treatment of the terms beauty and pleasure—terms having the most varied meanings, according as they relate to the senses, the intellect, or the moral will—smacks of the process which we call giving a dog a bad name as a preliminary to hanging him. This leaves the problem just where it was. Instead of asking what is art, and why we seek it, we must ask what pleases our higher faculties, and why? Whether it interests us more or less, the moral will is certainly not inde-

pendent of the intellect and the emotions. We may regard human faculties as essentially one, in which case the ideas of beauty and truth are held in solution with that of goodness; or we may prefer for convenience the threefold category. The facts remain the same. Let us by all means hoe potatoes, or mow grass, or chop wood, or cobble boots for forty days per annum; in the remaining three hundred and twenty-five we may hope at last to discover the true Gospel of the Senses. "Art was given for that," Browning made Fra Lippo Lippi say; "God uses us to help each other so, *Lending our minds out.*" There is all the truth, and much more, and none of the falsity of Tolstoy's definition:—

"The beauty and the wonder and the power,
The shapes of things, their colours, lights, and shades,
Changes, surprises—and God made it all.
For what? . . . What's it all about?
To be passed over, despised, or dwelt upon?—
Wondered at?"

So also testifies our greatest living English preacher, James Martineau:—

"Neglected duties are not enforced by architecture, or victories over temptation achieved by music. Not that the congeniality of beauty with goodness is for a moment to be denied; but her ministrations are too circuitous and subtle for the mere moralist to appreciate, and too sensitive and shrinking to lend themselves to the service of his will. . . . We are not, nor is the soul of souls, all reason and moral sense; and the doctrine which proceeds on such assumption ignores the spontaneous affections, the intuitive enthusiasms, which are the living forces of all spiritual natures. *They* it is that create, while the others do but

control ; and in religion, to make everything of reason and conscience, and distrust all else, as only given in order to be watched and restrained, is to mistake the check for the power, and turn life from a hymn of love to a problem of prosaic skill."

So much in justice to our art, and our sense of its regal dignity. But let none of us make a mistake about Leo Tolstoy. When the critics have said their prosy say, he remains as before, the same magician that the Russians have enjoyed for forty years, brain and tongue of all those dumb millions ; fecund, instinctive, impetuous, prismatic ; no more to be flattened out into a logical system than a diamond is to be flattened out into a mirror of the Philistine's stupidity. So, if I speak of Mujikism and call Tolstoy the Grand Mujik, I am not belittling Tolstoy, but I am magnifying the *mujik*. For him, as for Jesus and for all prophets, Truth has many facets ; they see one, and speak it, to-day—another to-morrow, if they survive. Thirty years ago Tolstoy asked : "What is the good of knowing the precise position of Barcelona?" but he was insisting then that the want of artistic pleasure exists in all human beings, and is a legitimate craving which ought to be satisfied. Perhaps to-day he sees art in a less favourable, and geography in a rosier, light.

That deadly foe of all the prophets, the literal interpreter, the dogmatist and text-hunter, need not even go back thirty years if he wants to find apparent contradictions. Hot upon the heels of "What is Art?" there came a new and, in its direct object, most luminous essay on "Guy de Maupassant and the Art of Fiction." Here we have a conception of art which

goes far beyond that of "a means of union among men," the value of which is to be tested by the current religious sense of the time. "Three chief endowments," we are told, "in addition to talent, are indispensable to a true work of art. These are, first a correct—that is to say, a moral—relation of the author to his subject; second, clearness or beauty (they are one and the same) of expression; third, sincerity—that is, an unfeigned sense of love or hate regarding the object which the artist depicts." Genius is further defined as "that peculiar strenuous attention by the application of which the author perceives features altogether new in the life which he describes." Nor is this all. "No writer who has not a clear, defined, and novel view of existence, and still more, none who considers such a view unnecessary, can produce a work of art." Here is stuff for controversy among the disciples of the letter. Disciples of the spirit of its author's life and teaching will not fail to note a pertinent warning contained in this De Maupassant paper:—

"People who are but slightly sensitive to art often imagine that a work of art is of one piece when the same characters pervade it from start to finish, and the structure is raised on one fundamental plan, or when the life of a single person is described throughout. This is a mistake. It may seem in one piece to a superficial observer; but the cement which binds the building of a work of art into coherence, and which, therefore, produces a reflection of life, is not the unity of persons or of circumstances, but the oneness of the author's independent moral attitude to his subject."

We have had good reason to conclude that there was an element of exaggeration in "My Confession,"

and that M. de Vogüé fell into a quite obvious pit, when, in his brilliant and for the most part admirable volume, "*Le Roman Russe*," he hailed Tolstoy as "before and more than any one else, the translator and propagator of that state of the Russian mind which is called Nihilism." But in a world every road and prospect of which is blocked with dead conventions, sloughs of corruption, and the legions of an unscrupulous bureaucracy, the iconoclast must needs come first. Tolstoy is a rebel, but a rebel with a very clear and positive faith. He is attempting, for the Russian State and Church, what our reformers and Puritans did for ours. His onslaught upon art is at least as explicable as theirs. Art in Russia was, till yesterday, almost limited to that narrow range of decoration which the Church patronised. Ancient as the Russian people are, Russian literature, as we know it, is only a century old. There has been no time for native poetry, dramatic and reflective writing, to get into the blood of the Russian people, as Chaucer, Shakespeare, Milton, Wordsworth, Burns, have got into ours; nor, between the shears of the Censorship and the scorn of Count Tolstoy, is the outlook very promising. After all, we are agreed upon his major point: healthy art can only live amid healthy social conditions. In these days of triumphant obscurantism the best men must turn rebels, and rebels have no time to play in æsthetic fairylands. Something of this is true for free Englishmen also, but with a difference. Matthew Arnold's distinction between the Hebrew and the Hellenic spirits will be recalled:—

"While Hebraism seizes upon certain plain, capital intimations of the universal order, and rivets itself, one may say, with unequalled grandeur of earnestness and intensity on the study and observance of them, the bent of Hellenism is to follow with flexible activity the whole play of the universal order, to be apprehensive of missing any part of it, of sacrificing one part to another, to slip away from resting in this or that intimation of it, however capital. An unclouded clearness of mind, an unimpeded play of thought, is what this bent drives at. The governing idea of Hellenism is spontaneity of consciousness ; that of Hebraism strictness of conscience."

For two centuries Hebraism has been outrun by the ideas which we commonly trace back to the sublimer figures of that "small, semi-savage, slave-holding people, who lived two thousand years ago, who imitated the nude body extremely well, and erected buildings pleasant to look at." Still the prophet is necessary ; and it is not without good reason that Tolstoy, the Jeremiah of our day, is made known in London. The hope of Western culture is not in an alternation, but in a lasting synthesis, of these two great lines of human thought.

X

THE LIFE-TEST

“CHRISTIANITY not as a mystical doctrine but as a new life-conception.” Such was the sub-title given by its author to “The Kingdom of God is Within You.” And again, to Mr. Stead: “Propaganda is the temptation of the devil. Thy first duty is to live rightly.” How does Tolstoy pass his own Life-Test?

He has had his traducers in Russian society, especially in the critical moments when banishment or worse reward hung over his head imminent as Damocles' sword. With these exceptions (I need say nothing here of those disinterested, humanistic critics with whom my own sympathies lie), he has reaped a harvest of affection, admiration, and devotion, and has reached by sheer personal contagion an influence, which perhaps not one of the great heretics of history lived to win. Every witness tells of a plentiful kindness undimmed by age and an austere ideal. Speaking of the decade between his “conversion” and “The Kreutzer Sonata,” Mr. Behrs says that he aged visibly and his former gaiety disappeared, but he never became morose. “Instead

of shutting himself up from the world, as he was once inclined to do, he is now accessible to all and is freely visited by persons of every description. As for the peasants, his house is always open to them and they come constantly either to consult him or to seek his help. In the earlier years when his family visited Moscow he insisted on walking the whole distance. One of his first acts was to have his name removed from the roll of justices of the peace. He became a vegetarian, a teetotaler, and gave up sport, which he had hitherto enjoyed so heartily. Not only did he abandon his rights in the ancestral domain, but he gave out to the world that any one who cared to print or reprint his later works was free to do so.¹ In all possible ways he

¹ He has more recently addressed the following "declaration" to the English Press: "Some years ago a notice was made by me in the Russian Press to the effect that, as I did not consider it right on my part to receive money for my literary work, I therefore grant the right, without any exception or difference, to all who wish to print or reprint, in the original or from translations, in their entirety or in the newspapers, my works that have appeared or are about to appear, commencing from the year 1881. Notwithstanding this intimation made by the writer, and which has probably not reached the French, English, and German publishers abroad, I frequently receive letters offering to print in journals for a stipulated payment, together with the request to give this or that publishing firm the exclusive right of publishing. There are even instances when certain publishers ascribe to themselves this exceptional right, and contest it with others. . . . In view of these misunderstandings, I again declare that I do not give any one the exclusive, or even the preferential, right of publishing my works and translating from them—I offer it indiscriminately to all those publishers who find the publication of my works or their translation desirable."

simplified his life, and made himself independent of personal servants. He could hardly suppose that this put him upon a level with the enslaved and hungry labourers; but it certainly constituted a striking example of individual sobriety, industry, and unselfishness to the men of his own class. In pursuit of a special manual occupation he took up shoemaking; but when in good health and at the right season he preferred ploughing. Wood-chopping was another form of ever-useful labour which engaged him, and in sowing seed or any other part of farm routine he was constantly at the command of the neighbouring peasantry. Mr. Jonas Stadling, Mr. Crosby, and many other writers have given us pleasant glimpses of the home-life at Yasnaya Polyana. The Count, says the last-named visitor,¹ is just like the pictures of him.

"He is dressed like a peasant in a grey-white blouse of thin, coarse, canvas-like material, with a leather belt and dark trousers; but his toilet differs from a peasant's in being scrupulously clean. His features are irregular and plain, and yet his figure is so strong and massive that the *tout ensemble* is striking and fine-looking. His little blue eyes peer out from under his bushy eyebrows with the kindest of expressions. He is a great walker for a man of sixty-five [the visit was in 1891], and for two hours we stride over the hills and through the woods. We visit the house of a peasant, and he sits talking with the family for some time, and is evidently a welcome visitor. . . . Tea was served in the large hall on the second

¹ "Two Days with Count Tolstoy," by the Hon. Ernest Howard Crosby, in the now defunct *Progressive Review*, August, 1897.

floor. Here I met the two daughters of my host, one of whom had been engaged during the day in planting potatoes with a peasant woman. The family always sits up late in the country as the mail arrives after eleven o'clock, and the Count's mail is indeed an event. He gets letters, books, and newspapers from all parts of the world. . . . The house was furnished with the greatest simplicity. With the exception of a piano and one or two family portraits there was no ornament or unnecessary furniture visible. There were no carpets or rugs on the floors, and everything in the nature of luxury had been removed. I saw everywhere the desire of my host not to enjoy greater comforts than his village neighbours could command. After a time came the governess and the younger members of the family, a girl of nine and a boy of six, charming children both of them, and talking English with ease [Master Vanya died a year later]. After lunch Count Tolstoy came in from his study with several editions—English, French, and German—of the works of Lao Tse. He had undertaken to translate the Chinese writer into Russian [? possibly for his long-projected Penny Universal Classical Library, of which his own short tales had formed the nucleus], and was enthusiastic on the subject of his views. . . . We dined at five o'clock. The Count's two daughters take milk and eggs, but he will eat nothing of animal origin; nor does he touch tobacco, coffee, tea, sugar, or wine. His food is cooked in oil instead of butter or lard, and he indulges in a kind of milk made from almonds, and for tea he takes a decoction of raisins. I told him I intended to try vegetarianism some day. 'You may be sure that your wife will object to it,' he said."

In October, 1892, the Count deposited his memoirs and diaries with the curator of the Rumiantzoff Museum in Moscow, stipulating that they should not be published till ten years after his death; and in the following month he legally made over the whole of his property, with the exception of some lands which he gave to the peasants in Samara, to his wife and children. After a lengthy conversation with the

Countess on this episode, Mr. Crosby "came to the conclusion that to a great extent she shared his opinions, but that she regarded them as being in advance of the times, and that she felt bound to interpose sometimes when the children were concerned. When his landed property weighed upon his conscience and he besought her with tears in his eyes to take it off his hands, she answered: 'No; if it was wrong for him to hold it, it was equally wrong for her.' She thought that in applying such rules as that of manual labour attention should be paid to the physique and education of the individual; to expect her children to work in the fields was to make beasts of burden of race-horses." The eldest son, who did not accept his father's teaching, undertook the management of the family property, and entered the service of the local zemstvo. The second son, who accepted it, settled down with his wife to humble country life on one of the smaller estates. One son had conscientious scruples on the subject of military service, but was induced to submit by his mother, who feared the effect of imprisonment upon his feeble health. The second daughter was a thorough-going disciple.

The heroic work of the Tolstoy family in the awful agricultural crisis of 1891-92 is so well known that it calls for but short mention here.¹ Aided by his two daughters and three sons, and by some faithful and

¹ The whole subject is treated with much interesting detail in Mr. Stadling's book, "In the Land of Tolstoy: Experiences of Famine and Misrule in Russia," and in Mr. Brayley-Hodgetts' narrative, "In the Track of the Russian Famine."

energetic colleagues, and supported by the Countess, who received subscriptions and organised assistance in Moscow, the Count threw aside his literary work, left his home and went to the worst of the famine districts in Ryazan and Samara, moving from house to house, place to place, getting information, giving immediate relief and aid, opening soup-kitchens, corn and clothing stores. From morning to night, in rain, snow, and frost, this brave old man strove to succour the starving and inspire the helpless with new life ; while the political heirs of Mr. Katkoff attacked him in the Moscow Press, and described his network of relief stations as a "widespread conspiracy" against the Government. Which indeed it was, in another sense : for while the Government was suppressing private charity, the Tolstoys were boldly appealing to the outside world for help ; and while the servants of the Tsar were giving out that "there is no famine, but only a partial failure of the crops," the Tolstoys were publishing the facts, the Count himself assailing with bitter irony the wealthy idlers at one end of the social scale, who corresponded to the dying workers at the other.

"We, the noble-born *tchinovniks*, moved by a sentiment of charity and philanthropy, intend to feed our breadwinner, who himself feeds us all ! The babe in arms will kindly suckle its nurse, the parasite supply nutriment to the plant on which it lives and flourishes ! We, the privileged classes, who fatten on the earnings of the horny-handed people, we, who cannot move hand or foot without their aid, turn round and propose to feed them ! In the very proposal as it stands there is something ludicrously strange, inconceivable, grotesque."

It was reported in England that the Count had

been arrested, but that was a mistake ; he was only watched closely by the police. It was not the first time that he had risked punishment. When the regicides were sentenced to death, Tolstoy, filled with the horror of capital punishment, wrote to the Tsar interceding for them. The only reply he received was a smart reprimand from M. Pobyedonostseff. It is satisfactory to learn that "non-resistance" does not always mean to court insult, and that the Romanoffs do not always get the best of encounters with their humane subjects. One day, as Mr. Crosby relates, the notorious Grand Duke Serge, Governor of Moscow, asked a friend to invite Tolstoy to his house, so that he might drop in "by accident" and see him. But the Count declined to be a party to any such arrangement ; his own house, he said, was well known in Moscow, and if the Grand Duke wished to see him he could call there. If the great writer has not been punished it is not that he has not challenged such a step and that they have not discussed it, but simply that they dare not. Mr. Tchertkoff tells of a lady who was caught in the act, the very common offence, of circulating either manuscript, lithographed, or smuggled copies of his writing. In prison she came to the verge of madness. Tolstoy wrote to two Ministers on her behalf, asking why people who had his books should be punished while he, the author of them, was allowed to go free. Again he received no reply.

If the aged prophet has been left, the Inquisitors have wreaked a bitter and bloody vengeance among the humble and more helpless heretics. The perse-

cution of Stundists, Dukhobortsy, and other bodies of these splendidly courageous people has now reached what one must suppose to be the last refinement of ingenious infamy. Fines, exile, prison, flogging, being of no avail, the official abduction of children was adopted as a deliberate policy. All hopes of a new *régime* under the Tsardom are now dead. Deaf to humane petitions and protests,¹ it seems solely bent upon provoking a new and final eruption of responsive madness among a too patient people.

One other campaign in which the Russian Cœur-de-Lion has led the van must be mentioned. It is a fact, the full meaning of which an Englishman cannot grasp, that in these latter days hundreds of Russian peasants have been subjected to one of the most barbarous forms of punishment—public flogging: not for murder or any other desperate crime merely, but for inability to pay the Imperial taxes. That they may gather something of the extremity, not only of this type of outrage, but of the sort of spectacle which has helped to make Tolstoy what he is, and Russian life what it is, I shall venture a final quotation. It is from his account of a scene which he witnessed in September, 1892, in one of the famine districts:—

“The convicts (employed to do this work) spat on their hands,

¹ Together with a well-attested account of the persecution of the Dukhobortsy in the Caucasus the little volume, “Christian Martyrdom in Russia,” by V. Tchertkoff, contains a chapter by Count Tolstoy and his letter to the Commander of the Ekaterinograd Penal Battalion, into which some of the “Spirit-Wrestlers” who refused to serve in the army were drafted.

struck a blow through the air with their rods, and began. The bench was seen to be too small, so that it was difficult to hold the writhing, tortured man upon it. A wider bench was brought, while the poor, half-naked man stood with piteous mien and sunken eyes, his under-jaw shaking and his bare legs shivering. Then he was fastened more tightly to it, and the floggers resumed their work. At every blow the gaping wounds became more frightful and ghastly. Back, sides, and limbs were streaming with blood, and after each fresh stroke the victim uttered a hollow moan of pain, which he strove in vain to repress. From the thronging circle round came the sobs of the martyr's wife, mother, and children, besides the frightened, quickly-checked cry from those whose turn was to come next.

"The miserable Governor-General, who in the intoxication of his power persuaded himself that he was obeying the call of duty, counted the strokes on his fingers as he calmly smoked a cigarette, which an obsequious adjutant lighted in the flame of a match held up aloft.

"After more than fifty strokes the peasant ceased to cry or move. The physician informed the representative of the Imperial might that the victim was unconscious and that further punishment would be at the risk of his life. But the Governor-General, more than ever intoxicated with his brief authority, maddened like some wild beast at sight of blood, commanded the punishment to proceed, and the torture was renewed until the seventy strokes were complete.

"Then the Governor took his cigarette from his mouth and said, 'Enough ; bring out the next.'"

It was against heartless ruffianism of this kind that some of the *zemstvos* began to raise a protest early in the reign of Nicholas II. The Government severely discountenanced the agitation. At last, however, Leo Tolstoy spoke out. He induced the Petersburg *Exchange Gazette* to publish, under the title, "For Shame!" an appeal to Russian society, and this was reproduced throughout the Press of the

Empire. He showed that even in the twenties the grandfathers of the men who are now inflicting or defending corporal punishment regarded it as a shameful relic of barbarism.

"It is evident that so-called high-class society has undergone a horrible change. And what is most surprising, this change has taken place just at the time when the class which it is supposed to be good to expose to the abominable, brutal, and stupid torture of flogging—when, I say, that very class also changed, and especially during the last thirty-five years, since the Emancipation, but changed in the opposite direction. I have heard and read of cases of suicide among peasants sentenced to be flogged, and I cannot help believing this, because I saw with my own eyes an ordinary young peasant turn white and lose the use of his voice at the mere mention, at a *volost* court, of the possibility of his being sentenced to be flogged; I saw also another peasant, forty years of age, who, being asked by me whether the sentence of corporal punishment passed on him was carried out, and having to answer that it was, broke into sobs. . . . There can be no humble petitions about such deeds. They must be openly exposed and pilloried. They must be exposed because, when legalised, they disgrace all of us who are living in the country in which such deeds are perpetrated. If the flogging of peasants is the law, then this law was established, among others, for me also, for the protection of my peace and welfare. But this is not to be tolerated. . . . We must incessantly cry out, we must clamour that such a practice is a disgrace to all those who directly or indirectly take part in it."¹

Well, the Coronation, occasion of many foolish hopes, has come and gone; years pass, the agitation in Russian society smoulders on; and still the Crucifixion is re-enacted under the laws of a State

¹ *Free Russia*, the organ of the Society of Friends of Russian Freedom. (April, 1896.)

greater in all these externals than Rome in her zenith. It is no longer a single trembling figure that one sees stretched for torture, it is a swarming people; unhappily it is not a single cynical inquisitor, but a huge, trained, official machine; but also instead of a single protesting voice there rises louder and louder the swelling verdict of an indignant world, earnestly longing for the moment of Divine vengeance.

These abominations of social injustice, together with the ignorance and superstition which have made them possible, must soon pass away. But must Marianka the Cossack girl, and Plato Karatayeff the conscript-pilgrim, and Ivan the sagacious "fool," and Sutayeff and Bondareff, the peasant-preachers, pass away with them, as our old friends Chingachgook and Natty Bumppo and the backwoods Puritans have passed away from their Far Western world? The main stream of progress takes many turns, and moves with varying speed, but never reverses its course. The mine and factory are already ravishing Russia's virgin heart; the forests give way to the settler, the mountains are tracked, the prairie is ploughed, the city devours the children of the desolate village. Political freedom will soon come; and Russia, her revolution passed, will take her place, the youngest, freshest, largest people in the Old World.

How will they use their strength, and how shall we British meet them? Will they keep the noble spirit of their harder youth better than we have done, and we, seizing their gospel while there is time, crave their hands and heart in peace and amity? Or shall we,

in our greed of power and wealth, our insane self-confidence, court the onslaught of a new vandalism, and collapse amid the ruins of a civilisation which we are no longer worthy to possess or able to sustain?

APPENDIX

APPENDIX

PROVISIONAL LIST OF TOLSTOY'S WORKS

IN penning the preceding pages I have been constantly indebted for information, correction, and advice to several Russian friends. For facts especially as to Tolstoy's early life I have made use of the "Recollections" of Mr. C. A Behrs; and besides the books named in the text and the general works of Leroy-Beaulieu, De Vogüé, Brandes, many other volumes and a large number of magazine articles have been consulted. I have also to thank Mr. Volkhovsky, and Mr. Birukhoff, one of Count Tolstoy's publisher-managers, for courteous help in the compilation of the following provisional chronological list of the Count's works. The dates are those of the appearance of the Russian originals, many of which, however, have been first published abroad. They are sometimes only approximate, as the works circulated in manuscript or lithographed and hektographed copies before formal printing and publication. The time has hardly yet come to attempt a complete bibliography, including the different foreign translations and collections, and critical essays.

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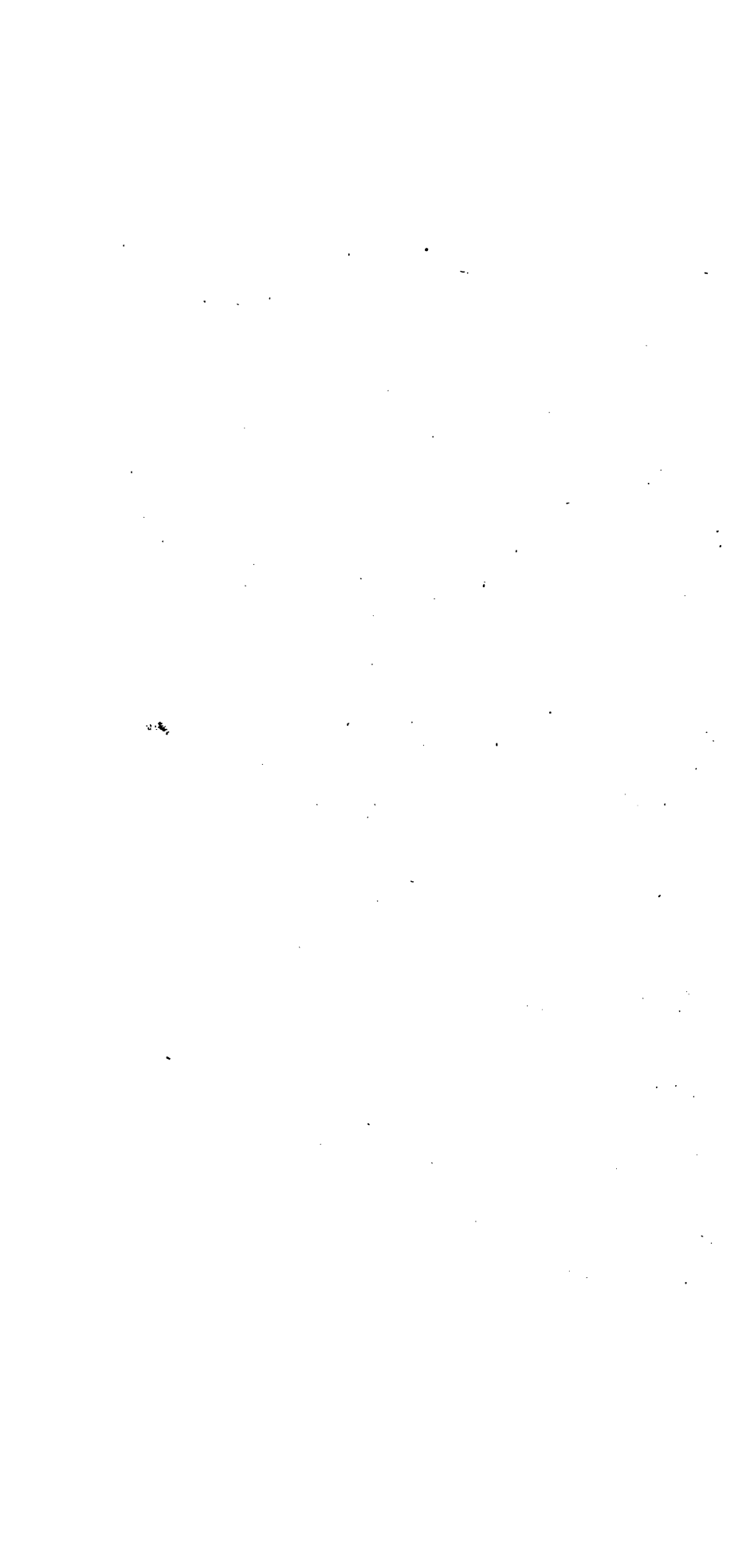
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